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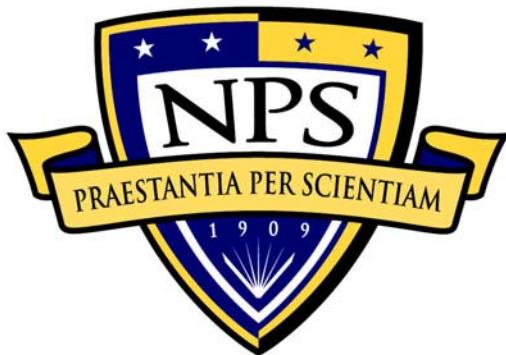


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**NAVAL
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MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**DETERRING CROSS-BORDER CONFLICT IN THE HORN
OF AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF KENYA-UGANDA
BORDER**

by

Benson Kiperen Ngeiywa

June 2008

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

Anna Simons
Robert O'Connell

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**DETERRING CROSS-BORDER CONFLICT IN THE HORN OF AFRICA: A
CASE STUDY OF KENYA-UGANDA BORDER**

Benson K. Ngeiywa
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B.Sc in Wood Science and Technology, Moi University, 1990

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This case study will analyze the nature of cross-border conflicts and deterrence measures in the Horn of Africa with a focus on the pastoral communities of Pokot, Turkana, and the Karamojong. These communities in northwestern Kenya and eastern Uganda are under intolerable stress and they are involved in a violent struggle to survive. While insecurity in this area is often characterized as arising from competition over scarce resources, there are broader dimensions to local conflicts. These revolve around a long history of social, cultural, economic and political exclusion. The states' role in the provision of security and support to pastoral communities is, on the whole, poor. Both countries have a tendency to sometimes use excessive military force. Pastoral communities have reasons to feel alienated. Lack of political will and corruption likewise frustrates efforts to keep the peace. This study seeks to examine the interplay among raids and counter-raids, internal security, the rule of law, and democratic governance. It proposes a number of steps for achieving greater stability in the region.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
A.	BACKGROUND	1
B.	SCOPE AND PURPOSE.....	3
C.	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	4
D.	METHODOLOGY	4
E.	ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY.....	4
II.	THE NATURE OF THE AREA.....	7
A.	PASTORALISM	7
B.	PASTORALIST RESOURCES: TRADITIONAL SOURCES OF CONFLICT	9
1.	Grazing.....	9
2.	Water.....	10
a.	<i>Rivers and Streams.....</i>	10
C.	PASTORALIST RESOURCES: MODERN SOURCES OF CONFLICT	12
1.	Land-Tenure Issues	12
2.	Boreholes and Irrigation	13
3.	Sand/Subsurface Dams and Infiltration Galleries	14
4.	Emergency Water Tankering	14
D.	THE TRIBES	15
1.	The Karamojong	16
2.	The Turkana.....	18
3.	The Pokot.....	20
III.	THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CROSS-BORDER CONFLICTS....	23
A.	TRIBAL RELATIONS IN THE PRE-COLONIAL PERIOD	23
B.	TRIBAL RELATIONS IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD	25
C.	TRIBAL RELATIONS IN THE POSTCOLONIAL PERIOD	26
1.	Kenyan Government Policy	27
2.	Ugandan Government Policy	28
IV.	THE SOCIAL- ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL IMPACT OF THE CONFLICTS	31
A.	SUFFERING OF THE PEOPLE	31
B.	BREAKDOWN OF THE SOCIAL ORDER.....	32
C.	ECONOMIC HARDSHIP.....	34
D.	POLITICAL MANIPULATION.....	34
E.	RAIDS	35
F.	STRAIN ON MILITARY AND SECURITY SERVICES	37
V.	DETERRENCE MEASURES	41
A.	PAST APPROACHES.....	41
1.	Branding	41

2.	Outpost Security Post or Military Detachments	42
3.	Political Approach and Corruption	43
B.	HOME GUARDS AND VIGILANTE GROUPS.....	43
1.	Karimoja District	43
2.	Home Guards in West Pokot and Turkana Districts	44
3.	Disarmament	45
4.	Civilian-Based Organizations (CBO), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), and Community-Based Initiatives (CBO)	46
C.	LESSONS LEARNED	47
1.	Timeliness and Effective Response.....	47
2.	Ownership as a Principle of Deterring Conflicts	47
3.	Engagement of the Right Actors.....	48
4.	Coordination and Partnership.....	48
D.	PRESENT APPROACHES.....	49
1.	Successes and Failures.....	49
a.	<i>Successes: Kenya-Uganda</i>	49
b.	<i>Failures.....</i>	50
VI.	WHAT CAN BE DONE?	53
A.	WATER	53
B.	COMMUNITY POLICING	53
C.	IRRIGATED AGRICULTURE	54
D.	MINERALS	55
E.	MEDICINAL PLANTS	55
F.	WIND, SOLAR ENERGY, AND OIL	56
G.	PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN	56
H.	POLITICAL SUPPORT	57
I.	JOINT AND COORDINATED DISARMAMENT	57
J.	BORDER SECURITY ROADS (BOSERS)	59
K.	BORDER SECURITY SOCIOECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORKS (BOSSEENS)	59
L.	CONSTRAINTS.....	60
M.	BENEFITS.....	60
N.	REGIONAL ACTORS	61
VII.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	63
A.	CONCLUSION	63
B.	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	67
LIST OF REFERENCES		69
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST		73

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	The greater Horn of Africa showing areas of conflict. Retrieved September 2007 from http://www.google.com/search?hl=on&q=Horn+of+Africa+map&bnG=serach	1
Figure 2.	This Pokot warrior was captured fetching water from a laggah (riverbed) for the livestock during the dry season. Retrieved November 5, 2007 from http://search.live.com/images/results.aspx?q=pokot+photo&mkt=en-us	11
Figure 3.	The photo shows a pool shared by humans for drinking and livestock. Retrieved April 17, 2008 from http://www.fess.global.org/files/uganda-esaf-full-re	14
Figure 4.	Map of Karamojong District bordering the Turkana and West Pokot districts of Kenya to the east. Retrieved March 3, 2008 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karamoja	16
Figure 5.	Map of Kenya and Uganda showing the area of study. Retrieved March 3, 2008 from http://www.bushdrum.com/news/districts_of_Kenya.php	18

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

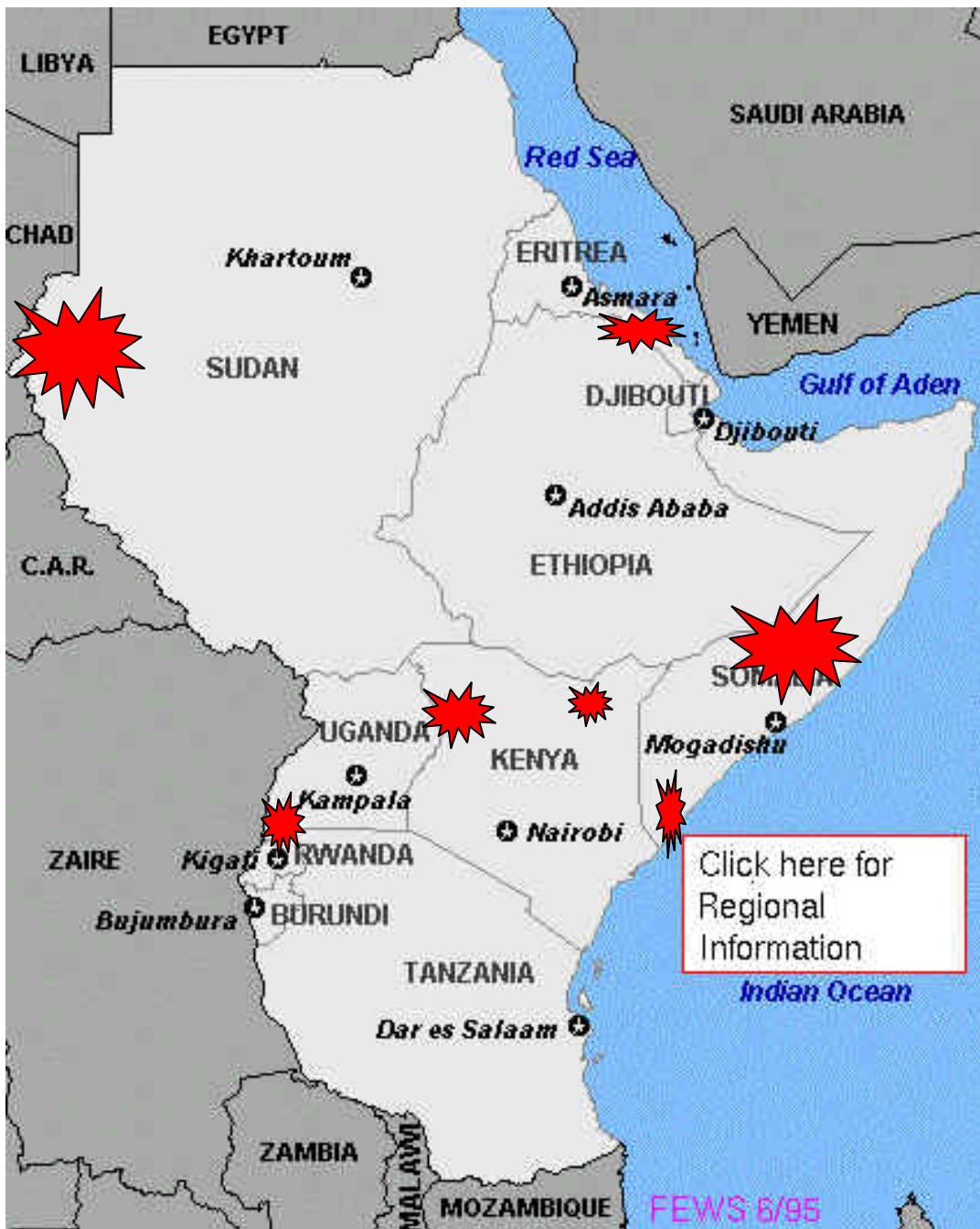


Figure 1. The greater Horn of Africa showing areas of conflict. Retrieved September 2007 from <http://www.google.com/search?hl=on&q=Horn+of+Africa+map&bnG=serach>.

The term “Horn of Africa” is used to describe the countries of Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and all their neighboring states in Eastern Africa. The Republic of Kenya and Uganda have experienced different types of cross-border conflicts from independence to the present day. These conflicts range from internal disputes between different groups in Kenya to cross-border confrontations with groups from neighboring countries like Uganda, coupled with spillover effects from regional conflicts in the greater Horn of Africa. These conflicts manifest themselves violently and nonviolently. The causes of the conflicts are many and complex, including poor governance, poverty, drought, famine, competition for scarce resources, and identity-based rivalries.

These conflicts have caused extensive local crises, drawn heavily on military resources, and have had an adverse impact on economic development in the region. The impact of violent conflict has manifested itself psychologically, physically, and economically, going beyond the material and affecting the lives of thousands of women, children, and men. In fact, for many Kenyans and Ugandans, this is the form of terrorism/ethnic terrorism (Waldmann, Peter, p. 245) they most worry about. Traditional morality has collapsed following a rupture in the structure of social relations on which peoples' lives were hinged. The Pokots, Turkana, and Karamojong strive to keep some livestock and those fortunate few who have incomes from trade and regular employment continue to invest in livestock (Markakis, 1993, pp. 147-148). Throughout their history, these pastoral communities have engaged in a multiplicity of economic activities, making use of a wide variety of resources within their reach and often modifying their animal production given the demands of other pursuits. Many now engage in subsistence farming. They also trade and make handicrafts. But some smuggle and engage in raids and make war on their own or for others.

Pastoralists raise different types of livestock. The characteristics of the animals and local environmental conditions determine the number and composition of the herds. Pastoral production systems are, by and large, a product of climatic and environmental factors. The objective of the pastoralist is to accumulate and maintain as much wealth as possible in terms of livestock. Pastoralists have been able to eke out a living from the harsh and unpredictable environment for centuries. In their long history, livestock

provided not only a valuable source of food, but also acted as a reserve of wealth, a redeemer from damage, a sacrificial gift, and a means of marriage and other ceremonial payments (Salih, 1992, p. 27).

Conflicts have political, economic, social, and cultural implications and contribute to the lowering of economic productivity, weakening of political institutions of governance, incapacity to provide essential services, destruction and depletion of existing resources, loss of food production, and capital flight. It may be possible to measure the cost of conflict in economic terms by assessing the loss of potential foreign and domestic investment due to fear of crime and insecurity, loss of income from tourism, and losses in government sectors like agriculture. Other direct consequences of violent conflict are the influx of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDP) from neighboring countries into Kenya. This is further complicated by the prevalence of small arms and light weapons in major towns and in pastoral areas in northern, northeastern, coastal and western Kenya along its international borders. This phenomenon is aggravated by neighboring civil wars and regional drought.

The border areas of Kenya and Uganda have, over the last three or four decades, been a major arena for a variety of low-intensity conflicts, some of which are linked to wider cross-border and regional conflicts. The roots of these conflicts are ecological. A history of economic and social marginalization looms large in all border conflicts within the HOA. Increased competition over resources, reduced access to land, water, and other natural resources due to increasing demographic and environmental pressure from within and without, and reduced access to credit, markets, and extension services that culminate in poverty, all play a role. This thesis will try to analyze the history of these conflicts, the evolution of government policies, the efforts made by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Interagency Organization (IO), peace initiatives, and possible deterrence measures to bilaterally curb this menace.

B. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This thesis seeks to examine the historical background of cross-border conflict, the security situation in the region, the nature of local and regional constraints, the

socioeconomic impact of raids and counter-raids, the past and present approaches taken by states and their limitations, the response of NGOs, deterrence, lessons learned, and the way forward in the form of recommendations.

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In conducting this analysis, the study addresses the following questions:

- What is the historical background of the conflict?
- Why do the communities continue to fight; who are the parties involved, and what are their aims?
- What are the negative effects of cross-border conflicts?
- Are measures being taken to curb this violence? What security measures have the governments of Uganda and Kenya taken to stop the escalation of cross-border conflicts? Could these measures be made more effective?
- What else can be done?

D. METHODOLOGY

The research methods employed in this thesis involve the use of primary sources—personal interviews were conducted in both in Kenya and Uganda—and secondary sources. I used a three-phased approach to analyze the problem and relied on personal knowledge and experience where necessary. The analysis draws on a wide spectrum of views from individuals, organizations, and institutions, both governmental and non-governmental. It is my intention that this document contributes to decision-making regarding cross-border conflict.

E. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The present chapter is my introduction to the problem; it lays out the general description of the cross-border conflict within the context of the broader Horn of Africa (HOA) with a particular focus on the study area: the Kenyan–Ugandan border. Chapter II highlights the nature of the area under study and discusses pastoralism, traditional and modern pastoralist resources, and the tribes involved in conflict. Chapter III presents a historical analysis of cross-border conflict and the relations among these pastoral communities during the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial periods. Chapter III also

discusses Kenyan and Ugandan policy regarding cross-border conflict. Chapter IV will follow with a discussion of socioeconomic and political impacts and the strain on the military and the security forces in general. Chapter V addresses possible means of deterrence and resolutions that people interviewed felt should be addressed in order to alleviate touchy and long-term problems. This chapter looks at past approaches, lessons learned, and approaches presently implemented, as well as successes and failures where applicable. Chapter VI addresses what can be done for these needy communities that have been in conflict for so long. Chapter VII summarizes the key issues raised during the research and offers recommendations that may help these communities through direct and indirect approaches, and with the assistance of international partners as a concerned audience.

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II. THE NATURE OF THE AREA

A. PASTORALISM

Pastoralism describes the movement of communities in semiarid and arid areas as people search for pasture for their livestock. This practice is common or routine in the greater Horn of Africa and particularly in the area under study. Due to a combination of rainfall patterns and the nature of the soil and vegetation, most of the Pokots, Turkana, and Karamojong keep large herds of livestock. Plant growth is only possible during a very short period of the year in most areas. The spatial and temporal rainfall patterns lead to very limited and seasonal availability of resources for livestock. This exposes pastoralists to immense risks and uncertainties as they trek long distances in search of grazing and water for their animals. The dry season is intense, from November to March. The rainy season typically lasts from April to August. September and October are transitional months. Between October and January, there is no water in most semiarid areas of either country. Water will only be found in localized areas, since most rivers are seasonal. From February to March, the Pokots, the Turkana and the Karamojong of Uganda experience complete drought until April when the rains return.

These conditions force pastoral communities to move from one place to another as a strategy, because resources are so scarce and scattered. Pastoral groups in the region (including the Toposa and Diding'a of Sudan) have adopted different strategies to meet minimum subsistence demands for survival from one season to the next. Among the Pokot, Turkana, and Karamojong, each pastoral group has specific grazing areas they exploit as communal grazing areas; that is, members of a specific community can access those resources belonging to that community. The three communities move herds following the first rains to take advantage of soft grasses and to avoid cattle's destroying crops in the vicinity of permanent settlements. This is an initial attempt to conserve dry-season fodder. Settlements are concentrated mostly in the central plains where sandy river beds provide more reliable water for animals and small-scale farming. When the

rains decrease, around the same time crops have been harvested in the settlement areas, the herds return to take advantage of abundant water and stocks of harvested crops, rich in food value.

During the dry season, when drought intensifies, the Pokot, Turkana, and Karamojong cattle keepers find pastoral resources outside their borders in neighboring districts. Before moving out into these districts, they usually send reconnaissance teams to negotiate entry and the use of resources owned by another community, in order to avoid friction. Ideally, pastoralists move into neighboring areas belonging to those with whom they share some common clan lineage. For instance, the Matheniko clan of Karamojong moves towards the Bokora –Teso–Karamojong border, not in the direction of the Jie, who are perceived to be hostile. While the Pokot either move to Kapchorwa to join the Sebei or their Pokot counterparts in Uganda, the Turkana mix with the Karamojong along their grazing areas since they have some common culture. These intertribal meetings can lead to conflict, however, when disagreements arise over what the interlopers do in the new location and the quantity or quality of resources they are allowed to access.

I realized during my interviews and research that the different pastoral groups have adopted survival strategies to cope with resource variability and scarcity. However, central to their strategy is the sharing of resources located across borders that are seasonally tracked by cattle keepers moving their herds. The movements of pastoral groups from Kenya, likewise, are never haphazard. Much of the time, it is Kenyan cattle keepers who move towards the common border with Uganda in search of grazing. The Turkana pastoralists move westwards towards the Karamojong border for water in the Kidepo Valley. Kenyan Pokot move towards the Kapchorwa, Kanyerus, and the trans-Nzoia districts to graze their livestock and make maximum use of reservoirs that were constructed on farms during the colonial period. Sometimes, the Pokot from Uganda move into West Pokot of Kenya during the dry season to avoid raids by Karamojong warriors. Cross-border grazing enables different pastoral groups to gain access to resources wherever and whenever they may be seasonally available. When pasture and water are physically located in an area that belongs to one tribe, the right to use them lies

with tribal elders. Tensions often build in the dry season as members of one ethnic group try to exercise their rights to exclude nonmembers. Tensions erupt when there is unannounced entry into a territory belonging to another group. Occasionally, disputes end up in full-blown inter-ethnic wars.

It is important to understand that cows are rarely slaughtered for meat or sold, except when males (male) are culled right after birth or due to old age. Females are more valuable alive since they provide milk, the main source of nutrition for the three tribes. Cattle are also a source of pride in these pastoral communities.

B. PASTORALIST RESOURCES: TRADITIONAL SOURCES OF CONFLICT

1. Grazing

Most of the cross-border conflicts in the Horn of Africa involve grazing land and water. The pastoral communities require these for their animals and agricultural practices. Watering points impact seasonal grazing patterns in the three districts of Pokot, Turkana, and Karamojong. Yet the provision of new water sources does not obviate the need for mobility to exploit the unpredictable distribution of grazing resources, and the introduction of new water sources in pastoral areas can have negative effects on rangeland—for instance, erosion due to over-concentration and overgrazing. Seasonal grazing patterns among each of these three communities involve leaving some areas ungrazed for some time during the wet season so they can recover and provide grazing during the dry season. Any situating of new watering points that fails to customary practices into account can undermine existing patterns and result in permanent grazing throughout the year, which in turn results in overgrazing. Unfortunately, most new livestock watering points introduced since the colonial period have not been based on an understanding of dry-season grazing patterns or planned in consultation with customary authorities.

What can be seen today is an expansion of agriculture in the more fertile areas such as Karenga in Dodoth-Karamojong, Kaputir-Turkana, Chepareria-Pokot which were previously dry-season grazing areas. This is due to the introduction of the ox plow

(Dyson Hudson, 1996:43) and the use of modern plowing technology in some areas. While this is beneficial to local communities or to some households in terms of increased agricultural production, it has meant a reduction in grazing land. A challenge lies in finding an effective balance between these two modes of land use. This has been elusive to date given the pre-occupation of state and development agencies with agriculture, to the exclusion of pastoralism.

What also came to my attention is that some land perceived by local communities as “their” grazing land, like Marich in West Pokot District, is gazetted and protected as wildlife and forest reserves. The same applies to some Turkana and Karamojong land. Grazing, settlement, and cultivation are prohibited in these areas, although these restrictions are not enforced in all areas. This brings about what one local man called “shrinking rangeland under increased grazing pressure.” In other words, people are feeling the effects of having reduced grazing areas available to them while their herds grow (Mamdani et al., 1992).

2. Water

a. Rivers and Streams

Rivers and streams form a major source of water for domestic use and livestock watering in the study area. The Turkwel, Suam, and Wei Wei rivers, along with many smaller ones, are the most important sources of water in the Pokot and the Turkana area. Likewise, the Kidepo valley in the Karamojong area is very handy to that community. Animals migrate to these riverbanks during dry spells, as most of the other rivers are seasonal.

Both the Kenyan and Ugandan governments have strived to develop new water sources in order to reduce mobility and encourage settlement. Increasing availability of water is frequently perceived to be a simple technocratic solution to the problem of getting nomads to settle down. Not only is this thought necessary to help people develop, but ideally it will discourage movement from one district to another. Part

of the rationale for the construction of dams and valley tanks by the colonial government was to limit the need for herders to cross tribal boundaries. This view remains largely intact and should be encouraged by all concerned parties.

In 1995, the President of Uganda issued a directive that the Karamojong and other nomadic tribes should remain within their district boundaries and the emergency rehabilitation of valley dams was planned to facilitate this (Watson, 1997, p. 11). The aim was to mitigate the likelihood of clashes over water and grazing. For security purposes, it seems important to change the lifestyle of the communities and concentrate them as much as possible on agriculturally based farming, especially along the main rivers in the districts that have the potential for gravity irrigation.



Figure 2. This Pokot warrior was captured fetching water from a laggah (riverbed) for the livestock during the dry season. Retrieved November 5, 2007 from <http://search.live.com/images/results.aspx?q=pokot+photo&mkt=en-us>.

C. PASTORALIST RESOURCES: MODERN SOURCES OF CONFLICT

The modern sources of conflict are twofold: land-tenure-related issues and watering points, both boreholes and irrigation. The challenges they present are extremely pronounced in northwestern Kenya and the Karamojong districts in eastern Uganda. Controversy over land dates back to the colonial demarcation of boundaries. With droughts and famines, ethnic groups trace their origins with a view to reclaiming what is perceived as ancestral land. The post- Kenyan-election crisis offered a vivid example as different groups sought to reassert traditional claims to land and oust interlopers. At the same time, livestock theft has been a major source of conflict in the region. A particular cause for concern is the demonstrated laxity by the government in addressing matters of importance, particularly when it involves cross- border movement.

1. Land-Tenure Issues

An appropriate land-tenure system is a particularly critical challenge for the sustainable management of livestock. Since most of the land in pastoralist areas is either trust land or group ranches, grazing land is held communally while stock management and ownership is individual in nature. Thus, individuals can only maximize their personal herds at the expense of the commons. This poses one of the biggest challenges to successful communal management of pastures, since there is no control on the size of individual herds. The community, under the auspices of the elders, sets aside varying amounts of reserved grazing. This usually takes the form of hills, and may cover many thousand hectares. The reserved grazing is used at the discretion of elders during the dry season or in drought years. It is important to note that traditional pasture-management techniques served the communities well in the past.

With changing circumstances and a changing environment, traditional ways also need to be complemented with modern knowledge that will motivate pastoralists to engage in a more agro-based system of farming. The natural potential for livestock husbandry in the districts has been declining over time due to degradation correlated with heavy overgrazing and the erosion of communal resource management. This has increased the vulnerability of most herders while only benefiting a few.

2. Boreholes and Irrigation

The people in these districts walk considerable distances in search of water during the periodic dry seasons when access to safe water for domestic and livestock use becomes a challenge. Some pans and dams built during colonial days are plagued by silting, breaching of embankments, poor maintenance of pumps, lack of fuel to run boreholes, and general underperformance of the facilities. Not many boreholes have been constructed since independence, but the available few are utilized for both livestock and home consumption. There is a de-silting program undertaken by the Ministry of Water Development, and by NGOs like the Arid Lands Resource Management Projects (ALRMP), and the Dutch NGO Schweizerische Normen-Vereinigung/(SNV) in the West Pokot and Turkana districts.

I realized that borehole yields are typically very low, indicating that underground water is limited. Besides boreholes, Lake Turkana in Kenya is a key watering point that can boost the livelihood of communities in the region. The Karamojong almost exclusively depend on available boreholes as source of water. Some are classified as “range boreholes,” meaning they are kept locked during normal conditions and opened for livestock use only during severe drought periods. Flows fluctuate with the seasons, leaving few of the boreholes operational during the dry season. This may be due to the fact that most of the boreholes are quite shallow and, hence, subject to seasonal hydrological fluctuations; or there may be over-pumping due to high demand. This study also identified some semi-permanent, shallow wells in the Turkana and West Pokot districts in Kenya, mostly hand-scooped holes. The number of these is usually higher during the wet season when temporary wells are dug in most of the streambeds.



Figure 3. The photo shows a pool shared by humans for drinking and livestock. Retrieved April 17, 2008 from <http://www.fess.global.org/files/uganda-esaf-full-re>.

3. Sand/Subsurface Dams and Infiltration Galleries

Like many arid and semiarid regions of Africa, West Pokot, Turkana and the Karamojong districts are crisscrossed by several sand rivers, whose potential for floodwater harvesting and storage has not been fully tapped. Sand rivers are ephemeral water courses that remain dry most of the year, with the valley bottom being covered by sand (Nissen-Peterssen, 2000). However, sand rivers flood during the rainy season, and the flows may last from a few hours to several weeks. This flood flow can be stored in voids under the sand if a barrier such as a dam embankment or sand dam is constructed across the river. There are several sites throughout the area that favor good sand/subsurface dams.

4. Emergency Water Tankering

Tankering is the provision of water using water tankers from a source, usually several kilometers from the needy community, in periods of severe drought. In the West

Pokot and Turkana districts, emergency water tankering is available but limited, since it is expensive. Tankering could be encouraged to better utilize river and rain water in remote areas, as a short-term strategy. In sum, the key strategic challenges in managing water resources in these districts include correcting poor management of existing waterworks and repairing silted dams and pans, as well as boreholes that are closed down due to disrepair. Communities need to be empowered to manage existing waterworks for their animals and themselves responsibly.

D. THE TRIBES

In the past, warriors from all three communities—Pokots, Turkana, and Karamojong—practiced the raiding of livestock as a means of acquiring status and to replace cattle lost through intertribal raids, drought, and epidemics (Ehrhart and Ayoo, 2000). Cattle raids represent a case of a cultural practice that causes environmental degradation and conflict. The tribes' perception of wealth is vested in the number of cattle an individual has and the belief that all cattle belong to him. This led people to keep more cattle than land and water resources could accommodate. Without careful communal coordination, such practices could cause overgrazing, land degradation, and conflicts in most of the study area. This in turn, precipitates further loss of cattle due to disease, as a result of inadequate water and pasture. To maintain large herds, the Karamojong in particular resorted to rustling cattle from neighboring communities. As the environment worsened, the Karamojong started to graze neighboring areas, especially in the Turkana and West Pokot districts in Kenya, as well as in Teso, Sebei, Bugishu, and Lango within Uganda, which resulted in more raiding and the displacement of host communities.

1. The Karamojong

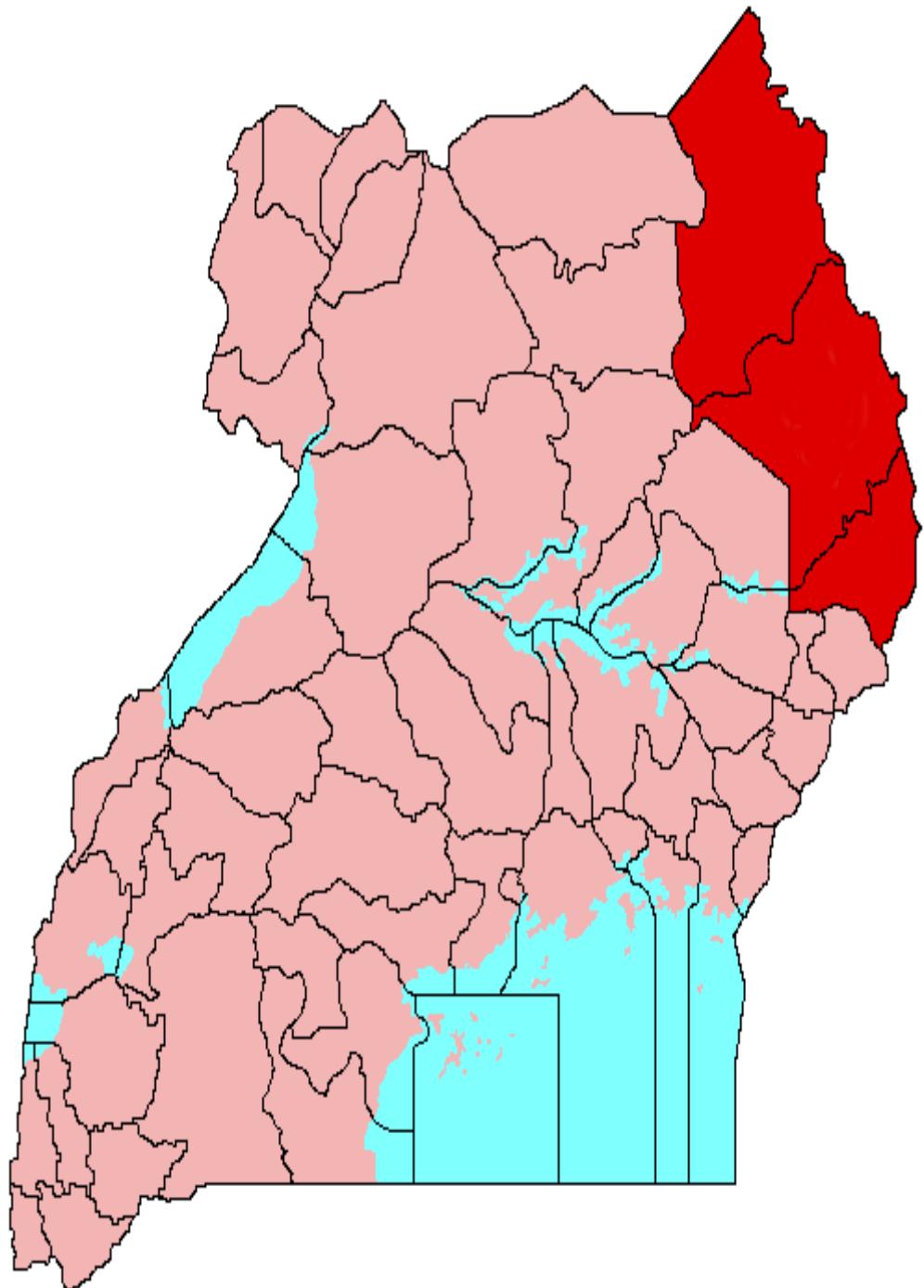


Figure 4. Map of Karamojong District bordering the Turkana and West Pokot districts of Kenya to the east. Retrieved March 3, 2008 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karamoja>.

Karimoja District is located in the northeastern part of Uganda, with an area of 27,200 square kilometers, mainly composed of semiarid savannah, bush, and mountains. To the east, the escarpment drops down into Turkana and West Pokot districts in Kenya; to the north is the Sudan; to the west and south are Ugandan districts populated by Acholi, Teso, and Sebei people. Among the Karamojong, dominant groups are the Dodoth in the north, the Jie in the central region, and in the south a cluster of closely related ethnic groups composed of Bokora, Matheniko, and Pian. In the southeast is the Upe subtribe believed to be a descendent of the Pokots of Kenya. The Karimoja District was one district up until 1971, when it was divided into the Kotido and Moroto districts. The Karamojong now live in five districts, since the government of Uganda created Abim, Kaabong and Nakapiripit in 2005 as additional districts.

The people of this area get short rains during April and a longer rainy season from June to early September. This may not be consistent, which may lead to more drought and famine. Cereals like sorghum and millet are grown when the environment is favorable. The Karamojong people focus much attention on their herds of livestock. Competition for scarce resources, particularly water and pasture, and the high value placed on cattle have produced a culture of raiding and warfare within which men are noted for their bravery and livestock wealth. (Muhereza, E. F., 1995).

Young men are encouraged to establish their reputations and generate wealth by mounting raids on other pastoral groups. The predominantly cattle-keeping groups who lead a more transhumant life include the Dodoth, Jie, Bokora, Pian, Pokot (Suk) and Matheniko. The Labwor are more of a settled agricultural community.

Karamojong's topography is characterized by high mountains rising between 2000m and 3000m that border the Turkana escarpment on the Kenyan side. The settlements are concentrated in the central plains where crop cultivation is possible. Much of the soil is washed away in the drier, eastern areas by surface runoff, hence making the soils bare (Mamdani, M., P.M.B, Kosoma and A.B. Katende, 1992).

2. The Turkana



Figure 5. Map of Kenya and Uganda showing the area of study. Retrieved March 3, 2008 from http://www.bushdrum.com/news/districts_of_Kenya.php.

Turkana District has been described as an inhospitable environment, since it is dry and hot year round (McCabe and Ellis, 1987). Its area is 77,000 sq km with a population of over 340,000 people. Lying within the Great East African Rift Valley, the district is bordered by chains of ridges and mountains to the west towards Uganda. In the east is Lake Turkana. The Pokot, Rendille and Samburu of Kenya live to the south. Predatory raids on livestock are a common means of survival. However, the Turkana have been

encouraged to fish and farm by aid agencies and the government as alternative means of survival. Irregularity of rainfall is a characteristic feature from year to year. The long rainfall is expected from March to May and short rains come towards the end of the year, with mountain ranges receiving the bulk of the rains. The district has a low population density with an average of 2.3 persons per square kilometer. The areas with little or no population are in the southern, southwestern, and northwestern sections bordering West Pokot District and the Sudan, respectively. About 40% of the population is found in and around settlements and irrigation schemes.

The Turkana are the second most populous group of pastoralists in Kenya. These nomadic people dominate Turkana District. As is true for most of Kenya's pastoralists, there is little social structure to tie them down. They have learned to survive by taking advantage of every opportunity that comes their way, including expansion into non-Turkana areas. Neighboring people include both herders and agriculturalists: El Molo, Samburu, Pokot, Rendille, Borana, and Endo-Marakwet. The Turkana have shown their openness to change by adapting to life in fishing communities, agricultural schemes, and in towns whenever possible. Like the Maasai, Turkana are known as fierce and vigilant guards in the cities. The Turkana language is close to the Toposa language and somewhat more distantly related to the Karamojong and Maasai groups. The Turkana themselves are ethnically related to the Karamojong.

Livestock are central to the Turkana culture and all aspects of their social, political, and economic life revolve around them. Cattle, camels, sheep, and goats are vital to their lives and are the primary source of food (milk and meat). Livestock also play an important role in payment for bride wealth, compensation for crimes, fines for fathering illegitimate children, and as gifts on social occasions (Oba Gufu, 2001).

The Turkana rely on several rivers, such as the Turkwel, Kerio and many other seasonal streams, for their livestock and daily use. When these rivers flood, new sediment and water extend onto the river plain, which is then cultivated. When the rivers dry up, open-pit wells are dug in the riverbed to be used for watering livestock and human consumption. There are few developed wells, and often families must travel several hours in search of water (Aemun E. Philip, 2006).

3. The Pokot

West Pokot is one of the over twenty districts that make up the Rift Valley province of Kenya. It borders Uganda to the west, the Trans Nzoia and Marakwet districts to the south, the Turkana district to the north, and Baringo District to the southeast. The district has a total area of 9,100 square kilometers and stretches 132 kilometers from north to south. The terrain is relatively rugged. Major topographic features include hills, dry plains, and rugged escarpments. Altitudes range from 900–3000 meters, from the plains of Turkana in the northeast to the Cherangani hills in the southeastern part of the district. In the highest altitudes crop agriculture and livestock production are the major economic activities, while areas of lower altitude (1500–2100 meters) have low rainfall and are predominantly pastoral. Rainfall is bimodal with the long rains falling between March and June and short rains between September and November. The major drainage systems in the district are the Turkwel, Kerio, and the Nzoia rivers. Both the Turkwel and Kerio rivers drain northwards into Lake Turkana while the Nzoia River drains into Lake Victoria in the south. The district is inhabited primarily by the Pokots and has a population of 396,000 people, with a density of 37 persons per square kilometer. To indicate the district's diversity, the cosmopolitan Kapenguria division has the highest population density, with about 210 persons per square kilometer, while Kasei division has the lowest at 10 persons per square kilometer.

Traditionally, the Pokot are nomadic pastoralists whose lifestyle is rapidly changing to sedentary mixed farming, especially in areas where conditions permit. Like many other arid and semiarid areas in Kenya, this district has been experiencing rapid population growth for both humans and livestock. Physical infrastructure, such as roads, telecommunications, hospitals, and schools is poorly developed. The harsh climatic conditions over most of the area and difficult terrain make a large proportion of the district inaccessible. The sustainable utilization of natural resources in the district is hampered by a lack of socioeconomic and technical capacity. The greatest challenge is endemic poverty, a socioeconomic factor that has led to overutilization of natural resources in an attempt to meet basic needs. The willingness to adopt new water-

harvesting techniques, soil-conservation measures, irrigation, and cash-crop production to diversify sources of income is important to the district's economic health, but is a challenge when these are at odds with traditional practices.

The main livestock species found in the district in order of importance are cattle, goats, sheep, donkeys, camels, and poultry. There is, however, a gradual change in this order in response to population pressure, competition, and availability of pasture. Consequently, agro-pastoralism, is taking root with a marked increase in crop farming and horticulture along the riverbanks. Another discernible shift is the rising popularity of goats and camels in relation to cattle, in view of their tendency to browse rather than graze on the limited vegetation. Bulls, goats, and sheep are commonly sold to meet a household's cash needs such as paying hospital bills, school fees, and food expenses. Poultry is also rising in popularity as women and youth, who are not traditionally allowed to own cattle, can easily sell chickens and eggs to raise money during periods of need.

Insecurity is rampant in the district and often involves theft of livestock. Conflict over grazing resources is also common, in part due to the breakdown of traditional pasture-management systems and the increasing numbers of individual herds. Insecurity is often cross-border and makes sustainable utilization of livestock resources difficult. There have been recent attempts to reduce insecurity in the area through disarmament, but this is meeting stiff opposition from sections of the community, as will be discussed in a later chapter.

Based on area and cultural differences, the Pokot people can be divided into two groups: the hill and the plains Pokot. The hill Pokots live in the rainy highlands in the west and central south of the Pokot area and practice both farming and pastoralism. The plains Pokot live on the dry and infertile plains and herd cows, goats, and sheep. This is the group that is involved in cattle raids and counter-raids with their Turkana and Karamojong neighbors.

Pokot customs have much in common with those of the Turkana and Karamojong. Among all groups, wealth is measured by the number of cows one owns. Cows are used for barter, exchange, and most significantly as a form of bride wealth. A man is permitted

to marry more than one woman as long as he has sufficient cows to offer her family in exchange. This is the primary traditional way for wealth and resources to change hands in Pokot society.

Due to their small territory the Pokot have remained the most ethnically cohesive of the three societies, and often their competition with the Turkana is as much about community survival as anything else. Most of the Pokot were made landless by the colonial administration and European settlers who pushed them off the most fertile land into the drier parts. To a large extent, therefore, cattle raiding by the Pokot are both a natural response to disasters such as drought and an attempt to increase their livestock in good seasons as insurance against bad seasons.

III. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CROSS-BORDER CONFLICTS

The history of cross-border conflicts, raids, and counter-raids in northwestern Kenya and eastern Uganda dates back to the period when cattle-keeping people came in contact with long-distance traders. This was around the early 19th century, when pastoralists were the dominant force in East Africa. Today these communities are dominated, underprivileged, and impoverished (Van Zwanenberg and King, 1975, Chapter 1). For instance, the Karamojong of Uganda started trading with Egyptian and Abyssinian ivory traffickers and later Arab and Swahili traders in the late 1890s. These traders exchanged guns for ivory. The acquisition of firearms by the Karamojong enabled them to poach elephants and introduced a new dimension in the competition for scarce resources, leading to the development of a superior social organization. At the same time, the Turkana were also busy acquiring weapons from the marauding *shifta* bandits in Northern Kenya.

A. TRIBAL RELATIONS IN THE PRE-COLONIAL PERIOD

The historical foundation of cross-border conflicts calls for the need to study the historic relations among the tribes in order to appreciate current social, economic, and political realities. Prior to the 18th century, the Turkana district was inhabited by a diverse group of pastoralists, including the Samburu and the Merille (then referred to as the Dassenech). The entry of the Turkana into the region occurred during the second half of the 18th century and continued through the middle of the 19th century. The Turkana, having separated from their brethren, the Jie-Karamojong (now in Uganda), expanded their territory in all directions, displacing the Toposa, the Dongiro, and the Dassanech in the north, the Dodoth and Karamojong in the west, the Pokot in the south, and the Samburu in the southeast. Displacement by the Turkana occurred over an extended period. Many but not all of the defeated groups were assimilated. According to P.H. Gulliver, the Turkana were strong economically and militarily, since they were in

possession of guns. Although stable relationships historically existed between different groups, these relationships fluctuated according to the degree of conflict over grazing and water resources, which still is the case today (Muller, 1989).

For instance, the Ngikamatak clan who live in central Turkana district established symbiotic relationships with the Karamojong, which allowed them access to dry season grazing across the border with Uganda. In contrast to this arrangement, the Tarach clan in northwest Turkana not only have wet-season pastures in a drought-prone zone, but their traditional dry-season grazing lands are also along the border with Uganda—yet are insecure due to raids by the Dodoth sub-clan of Karamojong. They therefore use force to gain access to “their” dry-season rangelands.

It is evident that these three sets of tribes have to move temporarily from one place to another to exploit key resource patches and that such mobility requires some resolution of land use and management conflicts between these groups. Traditionally these methods included raids and counter-raids or negotiations. Since the last century, however, patterns of land use have been slowly changing. After colonization, borders were fixed and access to key resources was curtailed. Worse, the Turkana tribal area was split between more than one political entity, which conflicted with indigenous resource-use strategies. This meant that within the new fixed tribal boundaries, the environment was placed under even more severe pressure.

During the pre-colonial period, livestock transactions served to maintain social interactions that cut across tribal boundaries and linked neighboring tribes. What were called “bond friendships” grew out of mutual economic interests between groups that lived near each other (Sobania, 1990). Such relationships were very beneficial in securing individual survival in the event of disasters such as raids, drought, and diseases. However, pauperization occurred whenever this system of reciprocity broke down.

During the latter part of the 19th century, following a series of livestock epidemics, even wealthy stockowners were reduced to poverty. The worst-affected groups were forced to seek assistance from neighboring tribes. On occasion, the Karamojong went to seek food among the Pokot (Dietz, 1987), while the Turkana went

into the Dassenech country (Sobania, 1990), where the Dassenech allowed them to cultivate food. No individual kept all of his animals in one place, but always had some loaned to friends. The same arrangement is today still in place but has been disrupted by fixed borders.

B. TRIBAL RELATIONS IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD

Colonial governments in Kenya and Uganda adopted policies that contributed to the economic and political marginalization of pastoral communities during colonial rule. The colonial governments favored the establishment of white settlers and a plantation economy at the expense of peasant production. Pastoralism was regarded by colonial officials as a primitive mode of production and efforts were made to discourage it (Galaty et al., 1980, pp. 184-186). One method the government used was to demarcate tribal reserves for African populations. This was aimed at making more fertile land available for alienation to white settlers. The creation of fixed borders did not only limit free access to grazing land and water, but also increased social conflict among the Africans. These borders hindered the free movement of people and livestock. The pastoralists were adversely affected by these measures since their mode of livelihood required nomadism. Colonialism further exacerbated political relations in the area because, as access to land shrank and populations of animals and people in restricted areas grew, competition for water and pasture between settlements became more acute. Restricting movement was a fatal decision that meant that when animals of one group died, the only way to replenish stocks was through raids (Ocan, n.d.. p. 9, Markakis, 1993).

The colonial government also imposed market taxes, introduced quarantines, and engaged in de-stocking campaigns and other measures. These made border trade difficult and less profitable. By the mid 19th century, some of the communities in northern Kenya, such as the Turkana and the Pokot, had adopted transhumance, a settled form of pastoralism in which only animals are moved in search of pasture and water, while families remain in one area (Ocan, n.d., p. 4). Even these movements caused friction and hostilities between the Karamojong and their neighbors in Kenya over meager resources. Relationships invariably worsened during the dry season.

C. TRIBAL RELATIONS IN THE POSTCOLONIAL PERIOD

Land-use conflicts during the post-independence period in Kenya and Uganda have only worsened intertribal relations due to land-ownership issues. No endeavor has been made to revive colonial grazing schemes in the postcolonial period. Neither government had a clear range-management policy at the time of independence, while both also wished to avoid being associated with colonial repression of the indigenous population. For this among other reasons, border incursions continued unabated following independence in the early 1960s. Moreover, individual groups were allowed to make their own arrangements with their neighbors in regard to sharing pastures and watering points. The increased potential for friction as formerly restricted areas under government control were opened up led to an escalation of raids and counter-raids in the postcolonial period.

Community interrelations worsened during the early 1970s, when hardly a week passed without a raid being reported to the authorities. This was the time when the Karamojong hit the Pokot and Turkana hard. Security forces had to be deployed along the Kenyan–Ugandan border. This became a major preoccupation and strained military resources, as will be discussed in Chapter IV. Raids and counter-raids resulted in enormous loss of livestock, leaving a large proportion of the pastoralists destitute. Because of poor security, large chunks of grazing lands were abandoned, while secure areas became over-used. For example, the Mosol and Simbol plains, bordering Turkana District to the southwest, had been used in the past by the Pokot as a wet-season grazing area. Following incursions of *ngoroko* (warriors) into the area, and subsequent raids which resulted in thousands of heads of cattle lost and many people killed, the Pokot ceased using the area in 1974 (Conants, 1982).

One reason raids and counter-raids grew hard to control in the postcolonial period was that rustlers could cross international borders and then take refuge in their own countries, making pursuit by both security forces problematic, especially with the Pokot who live on both sides of the border (TDAR, 1979). Porous borders, coupled with poor security, only increased the potential for illegal activities and, in turn, suspicion led to distrust between the tribes and the security forces. This was the time also when the

Karamojong in Uganda broke into the Moroto army barracks, increasing the level of sophisticated weaponry available on the market (Soper, 1985). Arms from this cache found their way to the Karamojong, the Pokot, and the Turkana in Kenya.

More arms also flowed following the fall of the government of Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia in early 1990s. The secessionist war in southern Sudan has likewise injected more weapons into the region. As witnessed in the post- Kenyan-election fighting (December 27, 2007), the availability of modern weapons is likely to exacerbate tribal conflicts in the region for a long time to come.

1. Kenyan Government Policy

In an attempt to deter raids among all tribes, the British had created a no man's land along the international frontiers. Following the ratification of borders with Ethiopia, the British administration then embarked on policies that had profound ramifications for Turkana pastoralism. One policy was to prohibit Turkana from crossing international borders. Violators of these restrictions were punished by an instant fine of twenty per cent of the total number of livestock found trespassing (Lamphear, 1976). In spite of heavy fines imposed and patrolling of the borders by the army and the police, the Turkana, Pokots and other groups continued to transgress when grazing conditions proved inadequate in their territory. The prohibition on crossing borders seriously threatened Turkana pastoralism, based as it was on movements between wet-season grazing within Turkana territory and dry-season grazing that took them across international borders. The colonial government's grazing policy for Turkana and pastoral communities around the 1940s was centered on providing additional water supplies to ensure a more even distribution of stock and to rest the areas around the permanent water points. This was achieved by vigorously enforcing grazing controls to avoid ecological degradation (TDAR, 1943). Water surveys were conducted throughout the affected districts and likely areas for development of water points were identified on the basis of local requirements, particularly where raids were rampant. The aims were to relieve the

pressure on overgrazed areas, ameliorate the people's condition of life, and to keep people and livestock at a safe distance from the intertribal borders where raids were most common. Some of these initiatives continued for a short time after independence.

2. Ugandan Government Policy

During the pre-colonial period, land tenure and management were customary. There were a few variations from one community to another given differences among lineages vis-à-vis inheritance. As far as communal land was concerned, it was understood that this was for use by the whole community (Kisamba, 1992). Conflicts over grazing, water, and pasture land were very rare, if they occurred. Agro-based communities never bothered with title deeds since these were irrelevant to them. However, this changed when Uganda was declared a British protectorate in the 19th century and Ugandan kingdoms in the south entered into agreements with the British that paved the way for increased modification of land. From then through 1975, land became a source of tension. For instance, small tribes that were not represented well, like the Karamojong, were marginalized and pushed to the arid and semiarid areas of the country. This only fed local resentments.

The Ugandan government policy since independence has been to establish development projects, especially in marginalized districts, to alleviate poverty and insecurity. Where people are considered to be a threat to the scarce natural resources, the policy of the government is to protect those resources. This was achieved most notably through the creation of forest reserves, national parks, and game reserves. Unfortunately, the gazetting of these game parks and reserves alienated the Karamojong who were restricted to specific areas, like the plains, against their wishes. The Karamojong also lost more land when the late Idi Amin created Moroto Army barracks and buffer zones in eastern Uganda (Mamdani, Kasoma and Katende, 1992). This forced the Karamojong to extend their movements miles beyond their traditional grazing areas along the border.

Given frictions along the common border, the Ugandan government as early as the 1970s sought to impose a policy that restricted the Pokot and the Turkana pastoralist groups from entering Uganda without documentation from the relevant authorities. This

was meant to control raids and counter-raids as the tribes competed for resources in the dry seasons. However, any such controls have since been overtaken by events since East Africa Community states are in the process of liberalizing the issuance of common identification to allow free movement and trade between member states. What we could say, then, is that, the British were effective in controlling cross-border raids because they ran the government both in Kenya and Uganda. The necessary coordination and support could be achieved as required. The problem as both countries transitioned after independence is that they maintained sovereign border-non-interference policies based on prerogatives.

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IV. THE SOCIAL- ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL IMPACT OF THE CONFLICTS

A. SUFFERING OF THE PEOPLE

Cross-border conflicts have led to the loss of many human lives and the displacement of various groups. The old, women, and children seem to bear the brunt of these socioeconomic and politically instigated forms of violence. According to the former UN secretary-general Layashi Yaker in 1994, about 80% of displaced people and refugees in Africa are women and children. Violations of the fundamental rights of women and girls are widespread in times of war and civil strife. These include crimes like rape, torture, murder, mistreatment, and neglect (Ayot, 1995). In the cases of Somalia, Northern Uganda, post-election Kenya (2007), and Darfur, women have been left in situations whereby they can hardly make ends meet, with little or no basic resources at their disposal. The acts of violence and lawlessness in the region do not permit NGO, civil, governmental, or community-based projects to be implemented. Groups live in constant fear of attack by raiders or bandits. The often-wanton destruction of life and property and the use of terror in all its manifestations tend to undermine people's sense of value, dignity, and harmony. It should be noted that a climate of peace is a prerequisite for the respect and enjoyment of human rights, and for sustainable socioeconomic development. Northwestern Kenya, eastern Uganda, Somalia or Darfur should not be exceptions to this rule.

Also worth noting is that when security forces fail in their operations against bandits, they often vent their anger on the civilian population, whom they accuse of colluding with the bandits. As punishment, the security forces often confiscate livestock to pressure the locals to return stolen cattle. This is followed by rape accusations and torture claims against the security forces by locals and by human-rights activists. On the other hand, the bandits may also heavily punish some members of the local populace who may be suspected of working as government informers. The local people therefore find themselves in jeopardy or are unsure of how to balance the two forces. Such scenarios often lead to victims running away and escaping from the reach of either group.

B. BREAKDOWN OF THE SOCIAL ORDER

The colonial authority's preoccupation with pacifying the people led them to neglect any meaningful investment in social or economic development in either Kenya or Uganda. Unfortunately, traditional reasons for raids and counter-raids survived the test of time over the last several decades and marginalized communities adapted them to a new strategy. There has been a shift from the old attitude of raids as being game like to using them in sophisticated new ways to generate money. The main reason behind this is socioeconomic. With limited access to market and poor infrastructure leaves the means to market livestock limited throughout the region. Collapse of traditional range-management practices and growing pressure on available pasture is likewise increasingly interfering with traditional practices of seasonal pastoral movement of livestock that previously helped conserve pasture. The targeting of noncombatant women, children, and the elderly is one reflection of the breakdown of the entire social order.

The author of this thesis found out that the youth are structurally available, ready for mobilization, and are thirsty to work for the highest bidder. According to one Mr. Wero Karass, "the risks are more than the benefits but they better take it to make ends meet." Youth who feel most excluded from the social, economic, and political order of the society are submissive and easily manipulated. Their appropriation for violence by others has had a serious effect on the traditional hierarchy in pastoralist society. Traditionally elders were expected to have some moderating influence over the activities of the most aggressive youth, but they no longer seem to have that control.

In Kenya, the issue of social disorder started when the former President, Mr. Daniel Arap Moi, assumed office in 1978. The KAMATUSA (Kalenjin, Masai, Turkana, and Samburu tribes) expected political change in terms of gaining a greater share of government resources. When this did not happen, it particularly upset the Pokot and Turkana, given their loyalty to the government up until then. To date, they do not feel they have received sufficient economic and political dispensation. This has led them to try to survive by taking a new approach to banditry and cattle rustling in northwestern Kenya. This is now further perpetrated by warlords or businessmen with political support.

For instance, the marginalized Pokot and the Turkana of Kenya are reasserting their historical claims to the fertile lands of Trans-Nzoia District. Historically, this district formed part of the Kenyan White Highlands, and the two tribes claim that they were displaced from there to worse areas that can not support them either agriculturally or in terms of livestock. Following independence in 1963, the highlands were opened to all racial groups. Thus, a number of prominent African politicians, businessmen, and civil servants acquired huge tracts of land from the former European owners under government-sponsored “willing buyer and willing seller” agreements. However, nearly all the new landowners are non-Pokot, which makes the Pokots and the Turkana feel even more disenfranchised. It is worth noting that at the time of independence, most of the Pokot or their Turkana neighbors had not been exposed to Western education and influence and thus had not yet realized the value of acquiring agricultural land. In the last twenty years, the Kenyan government has been subdividing state farms in Trans-Nzoia District. These have gone to politically favored and well-connected individuals, primarily Tugen and Keiyo, at the expense of the many landless locals.

Economically, Pokot, Turkana, and Karamojong districts are underdeveloped in terms of infrastructure, resource allocation, and the availability of economic and social services. Tribes in these districts feel that they have been pushed to the wall and must react in one form or another to reassert and safeguard their interests and make the government accede to their various demands.

Tribal clashes in 1992, 1997, and 2007 have pitted one community against another in Kenya and caused a lot of social disorder in the country. In 1992, when the multiparty system was introduced, a total of about 2,500 people, the majority of whom were women and children, were killed in ethnic clashes (Amnesty International 1993, *Daily Nation* March 20; June 6, 1992). The 1997 clashes also saw hundreds of people killed, mainly in the Rift Valley and Coast provinces. Thousands were displaced and hundreds of homes were destroyed and property worth millions of shillings was looted. It is alleged that the perpetrators of these attacks had given special training to Kalenjin youth (warriors) who were later sent to various parts of the country to spearhead the ethnic violence which involved the stealing or maiming of livestock, burning of food

crops and houses, raping of women, and selective killing of people. The aim of the ethnic clashes was to punish any community that was perceived by the government as the opposition, and vice versa. The recent post-election Kenyan crisis has been incomparably worse.

C. ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

The 1980s happened to be a period characterized by droughts and famines. It is not a coincidence that raids grew, bringing about massive looting of livestock and destruction of property. The Pokot and the Turkana lost more than 80% of their livestock during this period. By February 1982, about 50% of the Turkana population (180,000) were in refugee camps and depended on relief supplies (Markakis 1993:146). Most people were in a state of despair. Even today Pokots and the Turkana have not recovered from such heavy stock losses. Thus, social and economic differentiation has become more pronounced. In most cases, the displaced and impoverished pastoralists have been forced to resort to selling firewood and charcoal, or offering themselves as farm laborers, both of which are regarded as degrading activities by pastoral groups. According to Salih (1992) the communities are left with no options of survival and have little choice but to continue to try to exploit key environmental resources to provide food and income for survival.

D. POLITICAL MANIPULATION

The phenomenon of livestock warlords and political manipulation is rampant in the Horn of Africa, especially in the drier areas. Politicians have taken advantage of poverty and the ignorance of the electorate to influence them to fight each other. A particular community is made to perceive or believe that others are its enemies, thus causing hatred, tension, and frequent conflicts in the region. At present the warlords appear to be wealthiest among the Somali, Turkana, Pokot and Karamojong. In some areas they control all aspects of social and economic life and even the political orientation of the people.

In a sense, the warlords have become sources of assistance, particularly to illiterate people, and act as a law unto themselves. What is worse is that that the warlords

command small and well-equipped armies with more sophisticated weapons than those that government security forces have at their disposal. The state of insecurity and lawlessness in northwestern Kenya and the Karamojong region, in turn, further contribute to the collapse of social and economic structures and encourage communities to result to organized militias who themselves then conduct raids.

In Kenya, the Pokot have raided the Sengwer, Turkana, Tugen, Marakwet, Sabaot, Luhya and the Keiyo. Internationally, they have raided the Karamajong and Sebei of Uganda, while the Turkana raid the Toposa of Ethiopia. The lack of control over extensive porous borders complicates the scenario. Available evidence shows that the first warlord emerged in West Pokot in the 1980s. He mobilized a group of idle youths in the district by promising livestock. These young men underwent some vigorous military training under the supervision of ex-members of the security forces and were under the command of an individual popularly known as “General” Mauwa, who was later put in jail.

After undergoing their training, the warriors were sent on raiding missions against neighbors in Kenya, as well as Uganda and Sudan. Most of their raids yielded success in the form of livestock, although there were also some casualties during combat. Ever since these auspicious beginnings, raids have turned into a profitable commercial venture for both warlords and their retainers. Due to people’s disillusionment and anger over the government’s neglect of them, the warlords have managed to win strong local support, including from politicians. Thus the warlords, with the support of politicians, maintain, supervise, and become the final authority on the cattle “trade,” overriding the traditional powers that elders used to have. Available evidence shows that there are links between warlords and livestock traders from Kenya and neighboring countries, particularly the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), (Daniel Yemuk, interview, 2007). The raids and counter-raids have become increasingly militarized and sophisticated.

E. RAIDS

One thing that has assisted raiding and counter-raiding as a business enterprise is small-arms trafficking. This has become one of the biggest scourges in the Horn of

Africa. In reaction to the rise in violence and lawlessness, the villagers themselves are now saving money to buy guns illegally for self-defense. The perception here is that the only protection against an assault rifle is another assault rifle. The communities have lost faith in the ability of their own traditional security arrangements to protect them. Lacking resources, fearing loss of life and limb, and corrupted by the impact of cross-border smuggling networks, local authorities are hampered from increasing the protection they should provide along the border. Meanwhile, violence has fostered distrust among the people in the area, imperiling the maintenance of traditional conflict-resolution customs among clans and tribes.

In the longstanding cross-border conflict areas between Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, guns have been responsible for turning the traditional communal activities of pastoral societies into deadly confrontations. The rustlers seem to be succeeding in carrying out raids and counter-raids because there is no government control in some areas. The source of the arms is likely to be from neighboring countries like Sudan, Ethiopia, even as far away as Somalia, and Eastern Europe.

The raids and counter-raids among the Pokots, Turkana and Karamojong tribal groups have become polarized into never-ending rivalries that, for example, pit

- The Turkana against the Pokot
- The Pokot against the Karamojong
- The Turkana against the Karamojong

In the recent past, numerous incidents have been reported of cattle theft, people being killed or injured, and others being displaced as a result of intra- and interstate cross-border conflicts among the three tribal communities. The battle zones are Amudat, the area south of Moroto around Kanyangaren River, Loro, Katikekile, Kainuk, and other areas where the communities converge for water. The nomadic Pokot who live along the Kenya and Uganda border have extended their raiding to the Sengwer, the Luhyas, the Marakwet, and the Sabaots of the Trans Nzoia district of Kenya.

In Uganda, the Karamojong tensions or conflicts started between cattle keepers and grew to include other local non-pastoral resource users. It later spread within and beyond the communities under study, into Sudan. In the past, raids led to cyclical

violence because whenever one Karamojong group raided another, the aggrieved group would mobilize its allies, including those from as far away as Sudan and Kenya, to stage a counter-raid. The Dodoth-Karamojong, for example, is in alliance with the Turkana and they team up to undertake raiding activities among the Bokora, Pian, Labwor (who are Karamojong of Uganda), and into neighboring districts, while the Jie are sometimes in alliance with the Toposa and together raid the Turkana.

When resources are depleted and the herds need to be moved, this is done by heavily armed warrior groups. Historically, the warriors wielded spears and may have had a few homemade guns. Over the years, the majority of these warriors have since acquired modern automatic and semiautomatic rifles as spoils from the civil wars that have engulfed the region for several decades now. These weapons have turned been against the unarmed populations like the Sengwer and the Luhya in Kenya wherever they carry out their own dry-season grazing. Acts of lawlessness committed by armed cattle keepers include highway robberies along the Kapenguria–Lodwar–Sudan road, cattle rustling in the neighboring districts, and the rape of women and senseless killing of innocent people. Poaching also has been a problem. Armed Kenyan Pokots, who ostensibly cross into Uganda during the dry season to graze and water their animals, are accused of illegally hunting and indiscriminately killing wild animals in Kapchorwa, Uganda.

F. STRAIN ON MILITARY AND SECURITY SERVICES

The governments of Kenya and Uganda have been engaged in measures to try to restore law and order within the conflict areas of Pokot, Turkana and Karamojong. However, the governments seem not to have realized early enough the need to normalize the security situation. Consequently, the bad guys have grown so strong that they can effectively counter the government forces. For instance, bandits shot down a military helicopter in December 1996, which was carrying the Samburu district commissioner, Mr. Henry Nyandoro, and other district security personnel who were trying to conduct aerial surveillance of the raiders' movements. An alleged Pokot warlord used a bazooka to shot down the helicopter (*Daily Nation* December 28-31, 1996; *The East African*

Standard December 28-31, 1996). In addition, the bandits were said to possess sophisticated weapons such as rocket-propelled grenades and launchers, landmines, machine guns, and an assortment of other weapons. This illustrates the problem, as these events date to over ten years ago. Given the bandits' sophistication, the security forces are often hesitant to pursue them into their hideouts since they have learnt through experience that this might be suicidal.

Again, in February 1998, raiders from Pokot launched one of the bloodiest raids in living memory against their neighbors, the Marakwet (*Daily Nation* 13 February 1998). Thousands of people were killed or displaced; thousands of livestock were stolen; houses, stores, and farms were burned down; and women were raped. The Marakwet leaders reacted angrily to the mayhem caused by the Pokot, putting the blame entirely on the government for complicity in the attack. Thousands of security forces were deployed to the area to quell the violence and to bring the situation under control, but without much success. Two months later, the government sent a battalion of military men, heavily armed with sophisticated weapons including helicopter gunships, to support the police and try to flush out the bandits. However, this mission also did not achieve much due to the strain placed on military logistics and an outcry from sympathizers within communities. Again, the bandits were smarter regarding their environment and seem to have been well trained in escape and evasion tactics and in how to coordinate their operations. A study carried out by KDOD and other security agencies revealed that some of the raiders and troublemakers in both regions are former security men who are out for revenge for alleged dismissal from the services.

The last joint military operation involving Kenya and Uganda was to undertake disarmament in the North Rift districts of Samburu, Marakwet, Baringo, Turkana, and West Pokot of Kenya and the Karamojong area of Uganda. This was done between 2004 and 2006. The Kenya government is currently disarming the Sabaot Land Defense Forces (SLDF) with the assistance of the Ugandan government. The Ugandan People's Defense Forces (UPDF) is also disarming the Karamojong separately. These operations have always drawn a lot of opposition from locals, local politicians, NGOs, and human-rights activists. For instance, the 2004–2006 operation had to be called off once it proved to be

straining the military in terms of time and resources. It yielded minimal results in terms of weapons recovered, especially because it called for voluntary disarmament as opposed to forced operations which employ cordon and search tactics.

The governments of both Kenya and Uganda appear to be losing effective control over raiders who cross the border. The raiders are perceived to be very familiar with the rugged terrain and the hostile environment in which they operate, unlike the militaries of either country. As Markakis (1993, p. 13) argued in 1993, a number of pastoral societies were already growing more militarized and were increasingly relying on firearms. Thus, conflicts among pastoralists were taking on new and exaggerated dimensions. This he attributed to a shrinking resource base, which was provoking a desperate struggle for survival in which some groups felt their very existence was being threatened. This struggle continues and has been waged using even newer and more sophisticated firearms, which hardly spares noncombatants. The government's will to fight and instill confidence to the people may be there in theory, but in practice the resource constraints or strains on military and law-enforcement agencies are a major drawback, especially given the extensiveness of the area to be covered and the limited budget allocations to the security dockets.

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V. DETERRENCE MEASURES

The governments of the republics of Uganda and Kenya since the postcolonial period have held consultative meetings at the strategic level and down through the provincial administrations on possible deterrence measures to protect the pastoral communities who occupy the semiarid areas of both countries. The main problem is competition for natural resources—water and pasture (grazing areas)—and disputed land areas. The two countries have adopted approaches in the past extending into the present with the ultimate mission of securing and sensitizing their communities against raids and counter- raids. This chapter will discuss the approaches, lessons learned, successes, and failures that have been encountered in this process.

A. PAST APPROACHES

Several attempts or efforts toward regional approaches to deter or contain armed pastoralist conflicts in the Horn of Africa have been made in the past, but have yielded few results or have failed for one reason or another. For instance, the approach used by the British both in Kenya and Uganda was to restrict or control the movement of the pastoral communities within designated borders or areas reserved for that purpose (Barber, 1968; Muller, 1989).

1. Branding

Livestock branding is a means of identifying stolen livestock from a particular community. It was introduced after independence in both countries, though it has not been consistently done or enforced. Each region is given a particular mark and it this is used to mark cattle by the Ministry of Livestock, which is also supposed to keep records for ease of reference. Ideally, brands not only help the government, but Good Samaritans realize when livestock do not belong to a particular region because of the marks displayed. Security- conscious citizen should react by reporting errant livestock to their elders, the local administration, or to the nearest police station, if one exists in the neighborhood. The Kenyan government implemented this policy among pastoral communities in its northwestern districts. The system works well and is being encouraged

and supported by peace initiatives and agencies operating in the region. The government of Uganda has followed suit in Karamojong region so that any cattle that may be stolen from either side of the border can be recovered by security personnel. Government officials routinely raise the issue of branding livestock in pastoral conflict areas during cross-border commission conferences. However, while the theory behind branding and identification is certainly sound, without sustained community and law-enforcement support this system can't work effectively.

2. Outpost Security Post or Military Detachments

In their efforts to halt the insecurity menace, both national governments have established temporary police and military detachments to serve as forward quick-reaction forces. This was started immediately after independence because of cross-border tensions and incursions between Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Uganda. For instance, the Kenya government established military detachments in Northeastern Province because of the Shifta War with Somalia in 1967. Meanwhile, the Ugandan government set up Moroto barracks along the Kenyan–Ugandan border during Amin's regime. To counter this, the Kenyan government then formed a permanent military base in Eldoret and temporary forward bases along Kenya's borders with Uganda and Sudan. Such bases represent a response to both local and international security threats. Indeed, there were numerous security uncertainties between Kenya and Uganda during President Idi Amin "Dada's" reign in the 1970s. During this period, Uganda claimed part of Kenya up to Naivasha town, which is 90 kilometers away from Nairobi, the capital city. The presence of security forces in locations along major roads acted as a deterrent because the forces could conduct robust patrols and warn away raiders and any external threats. However, this did not yield permanent results since clever raiders from both sides learned the security forces' routines or standard operating procedures and intensified their raids elsewhere. Also, both governments' forces were overstretched in terms of their area of coverage, porous borders, logistics, personnel, and other demanding military tasks.

3. Political Approach and Corruption

The governments of Kenya and Uganda have tried to use politicians to help convince pastoral communities to stop raids and counter-raids and pursue other means of livelihood. Such efforts have worked reasonably where environmental factors favor other means of livelihood. However, some local leaders in northwestern Kenya and some Karamojong leaders in Uganda have been accused of politicking at the expense of the people. The perception that some politicians do not want disarmament itself helps frustrate government efforts in the region. Politicians' belief that asking people to surrender their guns will make them lose votes in an election is a hindrance to genuine peace initiatives. These same politicians have likewise been accused of corruption and mismanagement of donor development funds. Often community projects exist on paper, yet not on the ground.

B. HOME GUARDS AND VIGILANTE GROUPS

1. Karimoja District

Before independence, the governments in Kampala and Nairobi deployed home guards and vigilante groups. The program in Uganda involved recruiting former Karamojong warriors into the service of the state. Warriors who volunteered to register their guns with the state were given a monthly salary of \$10-\$20 as an incentive. After being registered, the warriors were permitted to keep their guns and were given uniforms, as well as some basic military training. This scheme was reinitiated in 1995 and had, before the end of 1996, a registered force of 8,000 home guards.

The duties of these home guards are to:

- Track down stolen animals and the errant warriors responsible for raids
- Watch, listen, and patrol along the existing roads and pass any information to chiefs, elders, or security forces.
- Try to convince other cattle raiders to change their way of life and encourage them to register their guns and join the group.

The plan in Karimoja was to have volunteers from every village (*manyatta*) so that the overall team looks representative and provides the basis for actual reconciliation between warring ethnic groups. As a result of this program, raiding activities diminished

after 1995 to small-time criminal activities. Law enforcement with respect to illegal gun use improved and criminals were prosecuted and their guns confiscated. Raided animals and looted properties were recovered and returned to their rightful owners (Muhereza, E. F and Ocan, C., 1994).

2. Home Guards in West Pokot and Turkana Districts

The use of home guard groups in Kenya dates back to the 1950s, when the government recognized that most Kikuyu were ready and willing to take up arms to defend themselves against Mau Mau insurgents. Members of the home guards were unpaid. No uniforms were provided and individuals were armed with crude edged weapons only. Nevertheless, the guards undertook a variety of missions. Most of the time they guarded fortified villages that had been set up to protect the Kikuyu from the Mau Mau. They also conducted limited patrols to prevent the Mau Mau from overrunning protected areas. Once the guards started to demonstrate some military reliability, the government supplied shotguns and rifles to them so that they could better fulfill their duties.

Then came the post-independence period, when raids and conflicts among pastoral communities grew rampant. The government started recruiting and deploying these guards in remote and inaccessible regions like Turkana and West Pokot to deter raids. Locals were recruited for the simple reason that they had the advantage of knowing the terrain and the people. In fact, they could—or can—tell who the thieves are and did a good job of recovering stolen animals. The government had to vet and issue those selected with rifles. In most cases, these guards worked under the supervision of the chief or reported to the nearest police station. They were not on the government payroll, but were given incentives like food for work. This made them very effective. Their roles are similar to those of the Karamojong of Uganda. However, increasingly today, the home guards are overwhelmed by the tactics and the firepower used by raiders. Latest reports indicate that they lack the motivation to work because the government does not meet their basic requirements.

3. Disarmament

The Kenyan government conducted a disarmament operation, code-named “Ngundo,” in West Pokot District in 1984 after the Pokots terrorized non-Pokots and neighboring tribes across the international border. Over 2,500 guns were recovered. Nevertheless, most of the locals escaped to Uganda with quite a large number of their arms compared to those recovered. The Ugandan government did not provide sufficient assistance at the time. The Kenyan government expected the Ugandans to block the border and arrest the fleeing Pokots or allow Kenyan military helicopter gunships to cross the borders in pursuit of the Pokot.

Another voluntary disarmament was conducted between 2004 and 2006 and about 2,298 assorted arms and 4,816 rounds were recovered. In contrast to the Pokot, the Turkana were not disarmed because of the risk of exposing them to attacks from Toposa and Karamojong. At this time, the Turkana were not causing as many problems internally in Kenya. In January 2001, the Uganda Peoples Defense Forces (UPDF) undertook a similar operation against the Karamojong. An estimated 14,000 guns were recovered as a result of a combined strategy of voluntary and forced disarmament. A second voluntary disarmament was undertaken in 2002, but did not last long because of other security tasks in the country. During this phase over 10,000 guns were recovered. The third phase was launched in 2004 with an estimated 4,500 guns recovered. Between July 2006 and May 2007, a total of 2,951 guns were recovered through forced disarmament, with 57 rifles being voluntarily surrendered. This time the Karamojong were reluctant to surrender their rifles. This forced the UPDF to engage in forced disarmament operations, like cordon and search operations (Karuhanga James, November 13, 2006).

Locals and human-rights groups condemned these more recent operations, claiming that they targeted innocent citizens. The disarmament did not last long due to the Ugandan government’s ongoing campaign against the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), a factor in Northern Uganda and in Southern Sudan. Meanwhile, the unilateral and Uganda-only disarmament of the Karamojong immediately exposed them to their perennial Pokot and Turkana enemies. This led the Lord’s Resistance Army and Karamojong elite to complain to the government that they were being exposed to their

armed neighbors and that they needed the state to provide them with basic security. The Karamojong went ahead and, in order to be able to defend themselves, rearmed. Even so, according to the UPDF Third Division commander, Brig. Patrick Kankiriho, so far the disarmament exercise in Karamoja has reduced cross-border rustling. The Moroto regional district commissioner (RDC), Nahaman Ojwe, wants the Kenya government to similarly disarm the Pokot and Turkana tribes to quicken the process in Karamoja. The district commissioner was quoted as saying, “The Karimojong warriors still have the fear that in case they totally surrender their guns to the UPDF, the Kenya Pokot will easily attack them. So it is not good for our people to disarm while the Pokots do not disarm” (The New Vision, 4 April 2008, Edyegu, Daniel).

Currently, the Kenya government is disarming the Sabaot Land Defense Forces (SLDF) in Mt Elgon District which borders West Pokot district and Uganda. The SLDF militia group has been terrorizing people for the past two and half years over land related issues. It has been reported that over 600 people have been killed, over 6,000 displaced, and property worth millions of shillings looted and homes burnt down by this militia group fighting for perceived land rights (BBC Africa, April 6, 2008). As of the time of this writing, Operation Okoa Maisha had recovered or captured 33 rifles, 205 assorted rounds of ammunition, and four grenades (KDOD, 2008).

4. Civilian-Based Organizations (CBO), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), and Community-Based Initiatives (CBO)

There are several initiatives by the local communities themselves working closely with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil-society organizations (CBOs). They have done considerable work in the semiarid areas in the Horn of Africa, such as sinking boreholes, providing veterinary services, and constructing health centers and schools. Attitudes towards them have largely been positive. “They have a sense of humor and are sympathetic to situations,” noted one church elder in an interview. Local elites and church organizations at the grassroots level are instrumental in teaming up to sponsor locally initiated projects to provide the necessary stable conditions for the delivery of services. In most cases they help fill the security vacuum in remote border regions. Local communities seem to have more faith in them than in government since they provide

space for dialogue and understand local needs. For instance, peace initiatives like the Tecla Lorupe Foundation (TLPF) and the World Bank funded the Arid and Semiarid Lands Resource-Management Program (ALRMP) operating in the pastoral regions of Kenya and Uganda and doing a commendable job. District peace committees also have played a pivotal role in providing an interface between local administration, elders, and civil-society organizations, despite limited support from government. However, as Dave Eaton argues in his article, “The Business of Peace: Raiding and Peacework along the Kenyan–Ugandan border (Part II),” there are two types of peace initiative in the northwestern region, especially in the West Pokot and Turkana districts. One type is genuine. The second benefits money-making groups of NGOs who seek donor funds without any real sense of what the people want. Politicians themselves seem to fall into this latter category and the warriors do not even trust them any more.

C. LESSONS LEARNED

1. Timeliness and Effective Response

Efforts to prevent or manage conflicts have the greatest chance of success if potential trouble spots are identified and addressed at an early stage. There is a need to develop both early and effective mechanisms for preventing violence and conflict and to identify trends and patterns of any conflict before implementing any plan. Delayed and ineffective action exacerbates conflict by accelerating the intensification or territorial spread of violence. Hence, timeliness in the dissemination of information to decision makers is very important for prompt action.

2. Ownership as a Principle of Deterring Conflicts

The parties to conflicts have the primary responsibility for conflict prevention, mitigation, and response in their localities. This is because the people concerned have the knowledge, history, and local interrelations necessary for the eventual transformation of the conflict. All interventions that aim to deter should use approaches that ensure that parties to the conflict take effective ownership of the process and its outcomes via dialogue. By harnessing the energy of local networks and fostering local ownership to

drive conflict mitigation approaches in cross-border areas, there is the strong possibility of future sustainability and replication. This means it is necessary to develop the necessary means for cross-border dialogue.

The conflicts in these areas are dynamic, interlinked, and tend to span ethnic and state boundaries. They constitute a system of relationships. As noted in the previous chapters, the nature of these relationships dictate that any conflict is likely to involve more parties than those directly involved in incidents of violence and conflict. The deterrence measures put in place must be responsive to changes in relationship and to changing situations.

3. Engagement of the Right Actors

Given that most problems that lead to violent conflicts cannot be resolved overnight, a longer-term approach to peace and security is important. Linear progress can't be expected. Rather, sustained engagement involves many different interventions at various times and levels. Equally crucial in ensuring that sustainable outcomes to conflict are achieved is to engage the right actors. One of the major causes of the prolongation of a conflict is the exclusion of a segment of the population from decision-making processes. Thus, including the right people in all phases of dialogue can make a significant contribution to building peace. Deterrence measures should thus more extensively involve actors at a number of different levels and should include civil-society groups, state institutions, local communities, and the traditional networks and social structures in each community or group.

4. Coordination and Partnership

The need for effective local cross-border coordination and cooperation efforts is generally recognized and undisputed by those on both sides of the border. Coordination promotes the leveraging of resources and efforts and it promotes efficiency. In addition, deterrence measures are sustainable when there is an institutional framework which groups refer to whenever differences emerge. For cross-border efforts, communication is

easier and response is faster when there are corresponding civil-society networks and structures on either side of the border. Close government participation, physical presence, and leadership are paramount in resolving any cross-border issues.

When traveling through the region, it is not hard to understand why government commitment and response to security remain inadequate. The terrain is rugged and complex which means initiatives need to be locally tailored and better coordinated.

D. PRESENT APPROACHES

The IGAD member states are establishing the Conflict Early Warning Mechanism (CEWARN) which is intended to provide information about impending raids and related movements. However, the mechanism is still in its initial stages of implementation. Efforts are also being discussed in the realms of joint disarmament, political approaches, community policing, and education. All will be further elaborated on in the next chapter.

1. Successes and Failures

a. Successes: Kenya–Uganda

- Traditional authorities, particularly elders, are now increasingly involved in reporting or responding to crimes like rape, murder, stock raiding, and assaults. They provide information to the police under the newly introduced community-policing project, and joint efforts with the police are increasingly believed to work. In part that is because security forces in these arid districts are more disposed than before to consult and liaise with elders and communities. The element of increased speed and commitment by the police in collaboration with the elders and the local leaders is very encouraging.
- The administration has played a role in actively supporting and enforcing the customary approach of forced confiscation of stock. Authorities hold a culprit in custody until some kind of compensation is paid. Then the victim is released with conditions.
- There has, likewise, been a shift to collective responsibility for security among elders, councilors, and chiefs of an area. Where banditry or raids occur, the relevant chiefs and elders are expected to deliver the guns used in the incident and return stock, or face confiscation of livestock from the clan as a whole. This method seems to be an effective deterrence measure

among pastoralist communities. It not only discourages raids and counter-raids, but spoils the reputation of a leader whose community stole from another.

b. Failures

Despite these successes, deterrence measures remain the major challenge presented by networks of cross-border actors. The problem comes when governments fail to incorporate all warring parties in conflict management, especially when they ignore the established social structures within the communities to deter conflicts. In this case, the excluded community feels neglected or marginalized and reacts violently. According to one interviewee who happened to be a Pokot (Mr. Daniel Yemuk), “Peace with the Karamojong is not enough without peace with the Toposa of Sudan, the Turkana and the Sebei of Uganda.”

Too minimal a presence by government officials or social workers is a further source of insecurity and failure. Most administrative offices lack officers and adequate security personnel. Another failure is the repeated promise of water for both livestock and humans. People tend to lose patience with empty promises, particularly women who must go long distances in search of water.

Incidents like rape are also likely to jeopardize fragile deterrence measures. The ineffective recovery and timely return of stolen stock, coupled with weak early warning and response capacity, constitute further failures from the perspective of affected communities. Inadequate communication networks make deterrence measures difficult to enforce. Just imagine an environment that lacks communication, where mobile phones and television are rare, radios and internet connectivity are nonexistent, and road networks are definitely poor. The rainy season renders all of this worse and is another factor that retards development. The task of disarmament is further complicated by the sheer number of arms available and the bottomless supply given the porous nature of the borders. Lack of employment, insufficient education, and the traditions that still encourage warriors to own guns complicate the scenario.

Because most of the locals in Kenya and Uganda do not get timely information about issues discussed by administrative leaders during border meetings, negative rumors circulate after these meetings. Compounding this is the fact that government officials or extension workers typically do not speak local languages and most of the locals do not speak Kiswahili and are illiterate. This makes contact that much thinner. The attitude of some government officials, who believe that they were posted in these regions as a form of punishment, only contributes to their lack of urgency. The impact of such individuals is negative, as they have little interest in really implementing any deterrence measures or government projects.

The other factors that contribute to failure include the marginalization of these communities from mainstream development and the unequal distribution of national resources. This plays a major role in inflaming ethnic tensions and discontent. Among these communities there are widespread feelings of neglect by government at all levels. Strong feelings of deprivation and neglect provide fertile grounds for ethnic groups to engage in communal violence and confrontation. The governments' failure to address the scarcity of resources, proliferation of arms, and lack of infrastructure discourages hardworking and motivated peace workers. Also a number of NGOs have collapsed owing to corruption, mismanagement, and political infighting.

Underdevelopment, neglect, and poverty are manifest in the absence of basic services (e.g., education and health) and infrastructure (e.g., water, sanitation, electricity, roads, and communication), as well as perpetual reliance on relief food. Any positive deterrence measures toward a durable peace need to address most of these problems and break the cycle of poverty, friction, and conflict.

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VI. WHAT CAN BE DONE?

To alleviate the problem of raids and counter-raids among Turkana, Pokots, and Karamojong of Uganda, I would suggest addressing underdevelopment in the region and the following issues.

A. WATER

Since water seems to be a major cause of pastoral conflicts, both governments should ensure that there is enough water by constructing valley dams to obviate the movement of pastoralists in search of water. There are also opportunities and potentials in water catchment areas like Kidepo Valley in Karamoja, the Turkwell, and Suam, Kerio Valleys in Kenya, as well as Lake Turkana in Kenya, that can be leveraged for water to provide sustainable livelihood options to the people of this region.

B. COMMUNITY POLICING

The employment and deployment of home-guard groups has been tried as a traditional policing method in the past but yielded few results or failed in some cases. In too many cases home guards collaborate with the raiders or those who support and sympathize with them. This is why community policing offers an attractive alternative. The introduction of community policing in Kenya and Uganda has been undertaken in countries in the Great Lakes region, for instance Rwanda, Burundi and even the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Community policing can help control the illegal movement of livestock and alleviate corruption and police malpractice.

This approach was pioneered in the United States, the United Kingdom, and South Africa, where it has extremely worked well. Kenya launched the strategy a few years ago and it is still in its infancy there. The pilot program involves working very closely with Uganda, and has incorporated East African community member countries with a view to minimizing crime and eradicating livestock raids along common borders. This should appeal to the local populations since the affected communities will be involved in providing the police or government agencies with timely information. What

is required other than more resources is to have the police forces throughout the sub region undergo some common training in community policing and education regarding the appropriate law in order to avoid violations of human rights. This will help to win the hearts and minds of the local people who always blame the police or the military for harassment, flawed procedures, lack of understanding, and insufficient training.

C. IRRIGATED AGRICULTURE

Farming has the potential to provide sustainable socioeconomic development in some of the districts under study. It can provide an alternative source of income, food security, and farm byproducts (e.g. hay) that can support livestock in times of insufficient grazing. Limited irrigation is currently being practiced along the main rivers, such as the Wei Wei, Suam, Turkwel, and in the Karamojong area. The rivers have the potential for gravity irrigation. This offers a development that can be taken advantage of to cut overdependence on livestock. Such projects would not only bring more cash in to communities, thereby alleviating high poverty levels, but would provide gainful employment for youth who are being lured away to join private armies, with the ultimate aim of raiding their neighbors for monetary gains.

The poor state of irrigation furrows based on traditional methods has hampered growth of irrigated agriculture in a number of districts. There is a need to empower the communities to manage them properly and to introduce more modern methods of irrigation through partnerships between the community and key stakeholders operating in the region. The private sector should be incorporated for the simple reason of marketing.

Where soils are rich these could be better exploited with assistance from the government. Most cereal crops like maize, millet, sorghum, and beans have been tried and the yields are good. People can even plant their crops twice a year in some areas due to the warm weather. Agricultural reports show that fruits perform even better than cereals. Some of this potential is being realized, but due to lack of support and insecurity-related issues, promising projects have been closed down, particularly those that were being supported by NGOs and run by people perceived by politicians during their election campaigns to be outsiders.

The governments of Kenya and Uganda, with the support of NGO and civil society, should encourage the local people through education and social seminars to consider agro-based farming where applicable, alongside livestock keeping. For this to work, both governments would have to address long-term land-tenure issues in order to prevent the possibility of continued conflict over land.

D. MINERALS

Small gold deposits, limestone deposits and, to some extent, oil are scattered all over the area of study, but these have not been commercially exploited and where money has been made the local communities have not benefited. However, strategic challenges associated with mining include environmental degradation and poor marketing and returns. Any mining initiatives must address the need for better regulated exploitation of mineral wealth in order to minimize the effects of uncontrolled artisanal mining. Potential strategic initiatives should focus on undertaking surveys to first establish the commercial viability of existing mineral resources and determine how they can be extracted for the benefit of the local communities and contribute to the countries' export earnings. For instance the Karamojong region has limestone and marble deposits that could be exploited to benefit the people. The Moroto region in Karamoja supplies the Tororo factory with the raw materials for cement. Yet, members of the Matheniko community (Karamojong) in the limestone rich area feel marginalized, exploited, and cheated, and all these contribute to resentment. The Pokots share similar sentiments regarding a limestone factory in Turkwell. At the very least, local youth should be hired in greater numbers to provide casual labor in the factories.

E. MEDICINAL PLANTS

The potential exists for commercial utilization of medicinal plants such as aloe vera or *Gum Arabica*, which are readily available in Turkana, West Pokot, and Karamoja District. These medicinal plants have not been utilized or exploited to the benefit of the locals who do not have technical production skills. Most women sell these products in local markets as traditional medicine (*sakit*). Many local people find them efficacious. There is a need to harness this resource and develop a marketing strategy for these

products. If locals engage in capacity building and developed cooperative societies, they could take advantage of available global markets and strengthen their bargaining position. Likewise, *Jatropha Curcas*, a popular nut found in Karimoja, can be used in the production of biodiesel, soap, and oil. Also there is the potential to exploit wood products from the Cherangani and Seker hills for pulp and paper production and other wood-based products.

F. WIND, SOLAR ENERGY, AND OIL

Travel through this area makes one realize that the districts under study enjoy long periods of sunshine and windy conditions that are suitable for solar and wind energy generation. The locals, with the assistance of the government, can tap or harvest this resource provided they have the necessary technology. Current technologies tend to be costly and unsuited to the mobile lifestyles of the pastoralist communities. But, provision of clean sources of alternative energy would slow the cutting down of trees, which is too common throughout the area. The potential of solar energy and electrification could change the lifestyle of the people, as well as boost their opportunity for development.

G. PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

Women are generally influential members in any community, whether they are literate or not. They can play a critical role as active participants in decision-making processes and community-based conflict initiatives. In conflict-prone areas like the Kenyan–Ugandan border, they are the first to fall victims and suffer most in the process. In many cases they suffer from various war crimes, crimes against humanity, including sexually-based violence that is used as a weapon of war. Despite traumatic experiences, women have already demonstrated, through their initiatives, that they are strong and dedicated actors in the peace, and hence deterrence, process. It is therefore important to strongly bring them on board for achieving long-term stability. Both governments, if not the entire region, should support the creation of women’s fora for peace and should do so at the local, sub regional, national, and regional levels.

H. POLITICAL SUPPORT

Parliament should be an instrument for peace. Parliamentarians, politicians, elders, religious leaders, youth leaders, clan leaders, teachers, and NGOS are the links or bridges between government and the governed, between the capital and the outlying regions, and among constituencies and communities within countries, especially in areas where communication networks are poor. They can easily disseminate the message of peace if the will is there and if it is exploited well. Therefore, the parliament has a duty to settle conflicts peacefully and not to engage in warlordism as practiced in Somalia. Parliamentarians are expected to be both more proactive and neutral in setting the political agenda for peace and prosperity, while articulating the needs of all the people, to build confidence and prevent escalation of cross-border conflicts. Parliaments in both Kenya and Uganda must accelerate the ratification of treaties and the harmonization of legislation on small-arms proliferation. They must also explain these developments to the people and frequently meet to discuss and advocate for regional peace. It is also up to each parliament, working with the executive, to devise a method of allocating resources fairly, so as to meet the socioeconomic requirements of the marginalized pastoral communities. No branch of government should be seen to be mismanaging government or donor funds. Every effort needs to be made to ensure transparency.

I. JOINT AND COORDINATED DISARMAMENT

Joint and coordinated disarmament can effectively go hand in hand with development. In fact, this may be the only way to ensure that a durable security can prevail. If warriors are presented with genuine, alternative means of livelihood then they should be more willing to voluntarily disarm. The capacity and trust are what is lacking. This is why the pastoralist communities are not giving up all their guns. Col Paul Lokech, the director of operations and training, UPDF Third Division, argues that the Karamojong solution requires a serious and committed disarmament that is followed closely by development solutions. Local leaders also need to help make the case for physical and

mental disarmament. This means that, as disarmament is being carried out, there is a need to simultaneously consider mobilization, education, and how to empower the people through economic development.

The UPDF has started a forced education program among the Karamojong. It is expected that if this works then it will impact on security and development. Social-education workers are among those in favor of rural youth going to school. But due to the attitudes that youth and the local people have towards education, they don't voluntarily attend—hence, forced education. Ideally, forced education will help change their thinking and the traditional belief that all livestock belongs to them. To compel education, the government could introduce laws that all chiefs or parents who do not send their children to school will be punished. Reports by Karuhanga James, a senior researcher with the Great Lakes Centre for Strategic Studies (GLCSS), indicate that the school-going population in Karamojong is about thirty percent of the countrywide estimate of eighty percent. This indicates how important it to invest more in education.

Joint operations to disarm pastoralists can only be successful if the populations living in the areas affected are closely involved and actively participate in such operations. Therefore, efforts to sensitize and mobilize the populations and the local leadership and administration will be necessary in both countries. The need for well-equipped forces to facilitate sustainable disarmament goes without saying. This means a regional disarmament committee needs to be created with joint command and control and standardized operating procedures (SOP) to closely coordinate, oversee, and objectively monitor disarmament operations with activities to be linked to regional strategies aimed at eradicating international trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Efforts should also be made in the realms of effective communications and psychological operations, and media should be involved to a greater extent than they are now.

Planners should be encouraged to establish community-based security systems via civic actions like roads, veterinary and health services that involve the military and community leaders in recovering and redistributing raided animals, and other activities to reinforce stability in the area. Once this cooperation is agreed upon, three types of military units will be needed: engineering, medical, and air cavalry. Pastoralist

communities never carry out cross-border or intrastate cattle raids when gunships are in the area. Their presence, even just on a temporary basis, has a critical psychological effect on the communities in regard to maintaining peace and cooperation.

J. BORDER SECURITY ROADS (BOSERS)

The construction of secure roads for easy transport of security forces, supplies, and rapid response to raids and counter-raids is paramount. The first set of activities that both governments should engage in is the building of border security roads (BOSERS). This will make this entire area more accessible. Roads are also critical in facilitating the movement of commerce and would especially help women who engage in cross-border business. At the same time, airfields and landing zones should be constructed to enhance air surveillance.

Underlying the use of the military is the simple fact that it possesses capacities that are too often underutilized. Although it costs states money to train and equip forces, a more secure country should generate the revenues to support such activities. Once completed, such projects should be handed over to the ministries responsible for maintenance and follow up as required.

K. BORDER SECURITY SOCIOECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORKS (BOSSEENS)

The second important set of activities requiring military involvement is the construction and development of infrastructure such as market shelters, irrigation canals, schools, health facilities, and housing units for security personnel and the displaced, in addition to boreholes, dams, and roads. These elements are critical to addressing issues of marginalization, especially of women, many of whom engage in small cross-border businesses. The countries' military units can easily be utilized here. Alternatively, the region can invite in foreign forces to help engage in civil-military actions in the form of combined joint-training exercises (e.g., "Natural Fire") to open up otherwise closed areas.

L. CONSTRAINTS

The following are the major constraints encountered by both governments in trying to fight cross-border raids and counter-raids in the pastoral zone. The first is that pastoral communities are reluctant to disarm since they see a lot of value in the gun. The motivation to hand over their weapon does not exist. The pastoral groups distrust governments. At the same time, each state remains suspicious of the other with neither taking the lead to permanently disarm their communities. This calls for the states in the region to collectively cooperate and commit resources to zero tolerance regarding the flow of arms into the region. In a situation where it is not possible to restrict gun trafficking due to the porous borders, control measures should be put in place to ensure that those in possession of guns don't become a menace to peace and order in the region. This can be done through registration of the guns being held by each household if disarmament is not successful.

M. BENEFITS

Consider, just some of the synergies:

- The communities who share a common border will cooperate and add value to their common resources, thereby overcoming the natural divisiveness that artificial, but now national, borders often create.
- Both Kenya and Uganda will benefit from the generation of new economic activities that will lead to new revenue streams for local authorities and each country at large.
- Another category of beneficiaries are special groups such as unemployed men, women, and youth who will be engaged in local construction projects. They will have an opportunity to earn income and learn skills.
- State militaries will gain experience through civic action and will also better understand the geographic and social terrain of the country.
- Medical corps can be used to reach remote areas and address the issues of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, thereby helping preserve health of the whole country.
- Such projects also allow international development partners to participate in regional activities such as environmental protection that benefit tribes living across the borders, as well as people elsewhere who fear that effects of global environmental degradation and climate change.

N. REGIONAL ACTORS

The long porous borders separating Kenya from Uganda and south Sudan represent a major challenge. Policing and monitoring them require coordination from regional governments. It's believed that over 40,000 guns are to be found among the Pokot and Turkana and the same estimate is likely to hold for Karamojong. The influx of arms is due to insufficient patrolling and policing of the common borders and inadequate government control in these areas. Kenya is a major transit route from Somalia, much as Uganda is from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Dinka and Toposa of Sudan are sources of arms into Kenya and Uganda. The reality on the ground is that both Kenya and Uganda can disarm, but without Sudan, Ethiopia or Somalia doing the same, they may only be repairing one seam of a leaky bucket. What is called is for regional and international actors to support the affected countries in this critical endeavor. Meanwhile, there is also the need to establish more police or security posts along Uganda's and Kenya's borders. Again, though, this needs to be a joint enterprise with a regional joint plan to deal with the security threat poised by the proliferation of small arms and pastorally related conflicts throughout the border region.

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VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to provide an analysis of raids and counter-raids by pastoralists in northwestern Kenya and eastern Uganda. These interlinked phenomena have had adverse effects on the people of the region by creating an environment of violent conflict, insecurity, and displacement. As I have pointed out, cattle's rustling has been transformed from a cultural practice to an international commercial venture organized by cattle warlords able to market livestock and their products. This has been made possible, in part, through the proliferation of small arms. With them cattle warlords can too often outmatch, and even undermine, the security forces. It is also evident that the adverse environment (ecology) and a lack of alternative sources of livelihood have promoted raiding and counter-raiding in this region. Policymakers in the governments of both Kenya and Uganda should identify better ways and means to support marginalized pastoral communities in the Karimoja, West Pokot, and Turkana districts among others.

There is an attitude by some government officials that pastoralists are more conservative and more resistant to change than are societies with mixed agricultural economies due to their adaptation to a harsh ecological environment and the intensity with which they value livestock. If such perceptions persist, states are likely to continue to ignore and neglect the welfare of pastoralists in terms of development and economic inputs into their areas. For the sake of border security, this attitude has to change and more effort must be focused on the pastoral communities.

To a large extent, it has only been NGOs and missionaries who have attempted to alleviate the plight of the pastoral communities through provision of schools, boreholes, health centers, and other services. The government itself needs to do more if it hopes to turn people into good, productive, peaceful citizens Available land should now go to deserving pastoral communities, not as in previous years when politically connected rich people benefited. The incorporation of pastoral communities into the market economy

should be especially encouraged via the sale of livestock and livestock products. At the very least, both governments need to take more positive and serious approach to supporting the work and efforts of the NGOs.

Measures like accurate investigative policing of cattle thefts should be put in place, with well-trained officers. Both aerial and foot patrols need to be undertaken to check on livestock suspected of being stolen property. This is where brands on cattle should help. Local leaders and NGOs should focus on negotiating the return of stolen livestock and restrain the victims from taking the law into their own hands since some of them still think, in traditional terms that “all livestock belong to us.” Cattle warlords should both be isolated and educated regarding the need to change their method of livelihood.

The security forces must refrain from using excessive force and mass punishments as these are likely to lead to future retaliation and escalated conflicts. It is critical that authorities adapt a more participatory approach, engaged in dialogue, consultation and coordination to address developmental bottlenecks within all three pastoral communities. In turn, this will contribute to building credible trust and a legitimate network of peace actors, structures and institutions, which cross-border communities can refer to whenever disputes or conflicts occur.

The peace industry used to be reputable. However, increasingly it seems to run by people who are out to make themselves rich quickly. There is a need to set up accounting mechanisms for donor- and government-funded projects in order for pastoral communities to see the benefits of these projects. As part of confidence building, NGOs, civil-society actors, and those engaged in peace initiatives should meet in the conflict region and talk to people and implement actions based on the needs and priorities voiced by the people themselves. Peace meetings should be undertaken in areas perceived to be dangerous in order to meet and lure the warriors into accepting strategies of change. In most cases, meetings take place in government offices, towns, or hotels far from the warriors. This defies and contradicts the logic of capacity building. It should be noted that cattle owners and warriors live in the bush. The warriors can easily be encouraged to participate by offering incentives like food and soft drinks during meetings, and T-shirts.

This will also serve to encourage them to attend future meetings. Tribal translators should be available so that the intended message can reach the people since most of them are illiterate. The selected NGOs as well as those engaged in peace initiatives should be conversant with the people's cultures and needs, and should be ready to operate in a changing environment.

As mentioned in previous chapters, people often make peace on their own out of necessity during periods of environmental scarcity. This is the time when governments and NGOs should be aggressive at introducing and reinforcing deterrence measures since the people are desperate. Both governments should positively exploit such opportunities.

As has also been discussed, there is a need to focus greater attention on the development of the pastoral zone for its other potential contributions beyond livestock and livestock products. For instance, it is worth considering tourism and the area's mineral potential. Lake Turkana is already a major tourist attraction, while West Pokot and Karimoja are rich in minerals and could attract eco-tourists and others. For these sorts of schemes to work, there have to be good working relations between Kenya and Uganda so that no raiding or violence occurs.

The security situation, from a regional perspective, requires a show of superior force over the armed pastoral communities in the region. Personal experience suggests that the success of security forces will depend not on the size of the army deployed, but on having a small and well equipped police anti- stock-theft unit or a well equipped quick-reaction force of the army. Such units have to be better equipped than the bandits and cattle rustlers. Such forces, when deployed, should work very closely with the local communities and their local leaders. Regular meetings should be encouraged at all levels to review the security situation more regularly and to discuss regional development strategies.

In spite of the efforts currently made by both governments, clashes often occur between the different Karamojong groups, the Pokot, and the Turkana of Kenya over access to and use of water. Where possible, ways to harvest and store rain water should be introduced to the people so that they will have water during the dry season. This may

involve developing projects along the border and working out mechanisms for sharing designed to bring warring pastoral groups together. Many projects of this kind could be initiated by Kenya and Uganda. It is possible that with a common regional strategy to deal with resource use problems in the region, each country could find it easier to initiate projects that would have far reaching impact in terms of improving the livelihoods of their citizens. Unfortunately, up until now instability has made development secondary to achieving peace and security in this region and has discouraged those who wish to venture into crop farming. In other words, both governments must end insecurity in the form of raids and counter-raids in the pastoral regions of Northwestern Kenya and eastern Uganda for any meaningful development to take place.

The lack of political will on the part of some leaders who are alleged to provide protection to cattle warlords is another obstacle that must be addressed by both governments concurrently. Politicians and elites in both countries should work and support the governments' efforts to fight insecurity in the affected areas. They should stop defending their people in parliament, public meetings, and through the press, especially when elections are approaching. Their activities can easily be perceived as promoting and encouraging warlike activities. It further dilutes the efforts of district security committees and peace initiatives of which the politicians are themselves members. Politicians should be peacemakers and not ethno-nationalists. Likewise, passage of information to the people is very important in areas where the infrastructure or networking is very poor. Regional and international partners should be of great assistance in this area, where peace groups rely on government security forces to provide escorts so that they can launch their missions effectively. There is potential here for tremendous cooperation. The two governments can plan the most appropriate locations for borehole development or the rehabilitation of disused ones. The borehole projects should be institutionalized, empowering selected community leaders to mobilize to improve water governance and management, especially where the facility is a common user.

In sum, the situation calls for a combined effort by both governments, as well as the affected pastoral communities, NGOs, and others, to address the problems described here and to formulate a strategy for finding solutions acceptable to all who live in the

area. It is clear that raids and counter-raids go beyond the capability of the Kenyan and Ugandan police. The international community can provide invaluable support through intelligence sharing and training. But also, it is important to re-emphasize that so long as those in these pastoral communities continue to live a lifestyle dictated by their harsh environment and influenced not just by cultural beliefs, but by poverty, illiteracy, underdevelopment, and tribal rivalry, the predicaments they are presently facing will continue to stay with them and any development efforts will continue to drag due to insecurity.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

This thesis makes a number of recommendations to both the Kenyan and Ugandan governments and to donor communities when it comes to tackling the issue of raids and counter-raids along the border between Kenya and Uganda where pastoralism is a major factor or source of livelihood. These are:

- Examine all possible ways to improve the security and protection of people and their property.
- Promote security reforms, to include the capacity building of the police, military, and border guards, improve their standards of training and methods of criminal investigation in dealing with pastoralists.
- Strengthen the response structures for conflict early warning. While concrete steps have been taken to promote the exchange and sharing of information and analysis among the cross-border networks, timely response is still weak. One way to address this is by linking the cross-border networks with the CEWARN mechanism introduced by IGAD.
- Expand deterrence measures and peace work beyond the study area to achieve sustainable results. This means including neighboring districts and coordinating across international borders to encompass the Toposa of southern Sudan who clash with Karamojong and Turkana over resources.
- Educate and sensitize the locals about the costs associated with tribal and pastoral violence. Pay particular attention to the use and misuse of firearms. This should be done through constant seminars and workshops involving various branches of government, various NGOs, respected community leaders (e.g., political, spiritual, traditional leaders, medicine men, soothsayers, respected elders, intellectuals, and appointed chiefs). Hold such discussions from the village through the district level. Harmonize laws relating to firearms countries and ensure closer collaboration between the governments and between their security forces

down to the grassroots and home-guard level. Firearms should only be in the hands of those authorized by law to carry them and people should be discouraged from taking the law into their own hands. They should be encouraged to report any infractions to relevant authorities.

- Document and disseminate lessons learned, coupled with systematic follow-up so that successful experiences can be widely shared amongst the warring communities.
- Support the development and capacity of government ministries to service the region through agencies working at the district level.
- Inject more capital into pastoralist development programs to address critical needs such as water, roads, communications (including mobile telephone transmissions and community radio-broadcast capacity) and markets. Facilitate practical, problem-solving partnerships between local government and cross-border community organizations to share basic services and strengthen community structures and mechanisms for the management of cross-border conflict and peace and capacity building. This will require greater investment in training, to ensure that the cross-border structures and networks remain sustainable over the long term.
- Give considered attention to improving peoples' standards of living. Diversification away from dependency on livestock is a significant issue, but one that neither country can afford to ignore or can afford to undertake in a culturally insensitive, disruptive manner.
- Re-establish and improve infrastructure so that closed areas can be accessed with ease.
- Take into account sociocultural practices such as pastoralists' needs and migratory patterns and the location of existing wells and boreholes when planning future water development, as this has a bearing on grazing resources.
- Conduct long-term surveys to document the number of people and livestock accessing specified strategic water points. Again, this is especially critical when planning for long-term water projects.
- Review the impacts of development on laws and regulations relating to land tenure and access to water.
- Rehabilitate non-operational water sources, especially those that need minor repairs.
- Encourage more rainwater-harvesting initiatives, especially sand dams which are less prone to pollution and high evaporation losses.
- Improve the quality of water for human consumption through provision of appropriate off-take structures, regulations, and community involvement.

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